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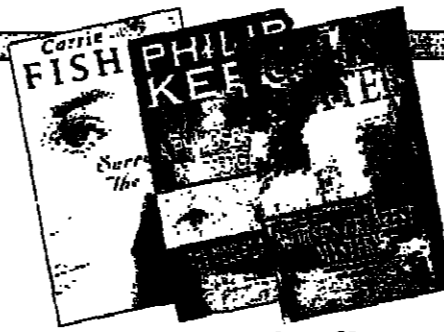
Ginny Dougary meets John Malkovich
PLUS: 24 pages of outdoor pursuits



SIMON JENKINS



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Defiant Major fights on for a year



Major: "Don't think I'm going to surrender"

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

A BATTERED but defiant John Major declared yesterday that he would lead the Conservatives on a long haul into the next General Election and beyond.

Thursday's local election results were among the worst for any governing party, leaving the Tories wiped out in several parts of the country. But the outcome was still not the cataclysm that would have had MPs calling for Mr Major to go, and many concluded that any lingering doubts over his future had been removed.

Instead, they were arguing either that Mr Major, with his proven campaigning skills, represented the

best hope of turning round Labour's massive lead, or that any attempt to force a change would lead the party into a possibly terminal civil war.

The results also convinced them that the Prime Minister cannot choose to go to the country until the last possible moment next May — although events may yet force an earlier poll.

Mr Major acknowledged that as he prepared his party for a year-long campaign, saying: "We have taken difficult decisions. We have had the political pain. The rewards are on their way. I intend to stay here until the rewards are there."

He then began to sketch out the battleground on which he hopes the Conservatives will turn the tide. He disclosed that he hopes to close the

gap with Labour by highlighting the differences between the two parties with fresh policies on welfare and long-term care, education and law and order. He also intends to use the European issue, which has caused him so much internal trouble, and the constitution to expose what he calls Labour's threat to the nation state.

But as Mr Major went on to the offensive, senior MPs rejected ministers' claims that the Tories were on the way back. Sir George Gardiner, from the Right, called the results pretty appalling and Quentin Davies, from the Left, described them as extremely depressing.

And there were few signs of a truce on Europe, with rightwingers urging Mr Major to adopt a harder

line to bring the party into tune with public opinion. Ministers' demands for an end to squabbling were countered by calls for the party to adopt more right-wing policies.

As the final results were declared yesterday, it was confirmed that the Conservatives had lost well over half the seats they contested. They lost 567 seats, while Labour gained 459 and the Liberal Democrats 147. Overall, Labour won 43 per cent of the vote, the Conservatives 27 per cent and the Liberal Democrats 26. Paddy Ashdown's strategists voiced delight at evidence that the electorate was becoming more adept in tactical voting and predicted a substantial increase in their current tally of 25 MPs at the next election.

Tony Blair, who warned his party

against complacency, attacked the Conservatives for their "arrogant" response to the vote. He described the result as "spectacular" and said that Labour had taken a huge step on the road to victory. One of his sweetest successes came at Basildon, as Essex Man deserted the Tories; others included Hertsmere, Southampton, North Hertfordshire, Rochdale, Trafford and Oldham.

For Mr Ashdown the prize was once true-blue Tunbridge Wells, and he also captured Wokingham, Hastings, Poole and Woking. The Conservatives were wiped out in 21 councils, including Oxford, Harlow, Slough, Stevenage, Hereford and Manchester, and there are now 50 authorities across the country with no Conservative members.

In a speech in Swansea last night, Mr Ashdown said that the Tories had lost the moral authority to govern. "This Government has now ended as an effective force. It is dead on its feet. It has no leader worth the name, no direction which is detectable and no purpose to serve."

But Mr Major insisted that the benefits of economic recovery would soon be felt. He told the BBC the outlook was the best for many years. "Don't think I am going to throw it away, because I'm not. And don't think I'm going to surrender it to anyone else — because I'm not."

Election results and analysis, pages 8-9
Kenneth Baker, page 18
Leading article, page 19

Tug-of-love Zulu boy sent home to his family

By JOANNA BALE

A TEN-YEAR-OLD Zulu boy left Britain for South Africa last night to be reunited with his natural parents after the white woman he had come to regard as his mother lost an extraordinary custody battle to keep him.

There were emotional scenes at the Official Solicitor's office in London as Sifiso Mahlangu bade farewell to his white 'adoptive' mother Salome Stopford, 50, and two of her three daughters.

The boy was then handed over to Mrs Stopford's former maid, Selina Mahlangu, 30, who had arrived in London from Johannesburg earlier in the day. Mother and son then boarded a BA flight to Johannesburg, where they will be reunited today with the boy's father, Charles, and sister.

Before the plane took off, he pleaded: "I really don't want to go. I want to stay in Britain with my family and friends. It isn't fair that the courts have not listened to me."

Sifiso has been brought up by Mrs Stopford since he was a baby and his mother worked as her maid in South Africa. While his parents lived in servants' quarters, he stayed in the five-bedroom house on a seven-acre estate in Brakspan, near Johannesburg. Mrs Stopford said: "I just wanted this child to have everything my kids had. He was such a dear little thing and we loved him so much."

Mrs Stopford's broker husband died in 1991, and when she decided a year later to move to London, she offered to take Sifiso, then six, with her.

The Mahlangus said they agonised over the decision but could not turn down the offer of a good education in a peaceful environment, especially as in 1992 South Africa

was in political turmoil. "My wife had no idea where England was or how far away it was, but we thought we would be closing the door for the child of we refused him this chance," Mr Mahlangu said.

The couple claim that letters and calls from London dried up in 1994, promised visits were not forthcoming, and that early in 1995 he learnt that Mrs Stopford had begun adoption proceedings.

Mrs Stopford says Sifiso's that parents showed little interest in the boy until after a magazine offered them money for their story and encouraged them to fight for custody.

Westminster social services became aware of Sifiso's circumstances in 1994. They opposed the adoption and Sifiso was made a ward of court.

Mrs Stopford says that social workers in one report accused her of treating Sifiso like a "much beloved pet" and sent a social worker to South Africa to talk to his family. Mr Mahlangu contacted the Black Sash, a South African civil rights organisation, which put him in touch with a lawyer and paid his legal bills.

Last year the High Court ordered that the boy should be returned to South Africa to rediscover his Zulu roots after a two-year rehabilitation period, during which he was to visit his natural parents and prepare himself for living with them permanently.

Mrs Stopford appealed but in March this year, the Appeal Court ruled that it was in his best interests to return immediately. Lord Justice Ward and Lord Justice Neill came to their "difficult and anxious" decision after acknowledging that it could cause him psychological harm — a psychiatrist said that Sifiso may never recover from the trauma of being separated from his white "mother".

The Appeal Court ruling was upheld by three law lords



A tearful Salome Stopford clutching Sifiso Mahlangu after one of many court hearings in her fight to keep the boy

at a private hearing last Friday and Mrs Stopford was ordered to send Sifiso back immediately. Yesterday her barrister, Allan Levy, QC, made a final attempt to stay the order by attempting to take the case to the European. But two senior judges rejected a direct request from the President of the European Commission on Human Rights to postpone

sending him back. Shortly after two o'clock, Mrs Stopford left the Official Solicitor's office in tears after handing Sifiso over. The boy had taken all his possessions including an orange bicycle and various toys. He left an hour later with his natural mother but without the toys: he had been told that he could take only a few clothes.

Mrs Stopford said last night: "I am heartbroken. I have lost my son and my daughters their little brother. It is all so unjust because he does not want to go." Sifiso last saw his parents last summer when he stayed with them for a month. He said afterwards: "They live in one room and I had to sleep in the same bed as my mother

and sister, while my father slept on the floor. I had to bathe in a bucket and use an outside toilet. And when I went to visit my grandmother, I had to sleep on a cow dung floor, look after cattle and fetch water from a well. I prefer my home and family in London because it is nicer."

Families' battle, page 5

Outcry after Cantona kick fan is freed

By RICHARD DUCE

MAGISTRATES, police officers and MPs last night condemned the release of Matthew Simmons, the football hooligan, after just 20 hours of a seven-day jail sentence imposed for attacking a solicitor in court.

But the Prison Service, which authorised the release, said that it would have been unlawful to hold Simmons longer. Simmons, 21, was jailed for contempt after an attack on the solicitor who had successfully prosecuted him for goading the footballer, Eric Cantona, who responded with a kung fu-style kick.

Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, described the release of Simmons after such a short period in jail as "risible" and said the magistrates could have imposed a tougher penalty. "This was a serious assault on a prosecutor," he said.

Like any prisoner serving

under 12 months, Simmons was eligible for automatic unconditional release after serving half his sentence which would have meant leaving jail tomorrow.

Because the 1982 Criminal Justice Act requires the Prison Service to release on the preceding Friday anyone whose sentence ends on a Saturday or Sunday, he was freed from High Down jail in Surrey yesterday. The Prison Service would have been acting unlawfully to have held him until Tuesday, the next day on which inmates are released.

Simmons was jailed by Croydon magistrates at 3pm on Thursday for an "obvious and serious" contempt when he launched an astonishing courtroom assault on Jeffrey McCann, the prosecuting solicitor.

Continued on page 2, col 1

Leading article, page 19

THE TIMES

With more than 1.6 million readers a day, *The Times* recorded the highest increase in readership of any broadsheet national newspaper in the six months to March. Average readership was up by 110,000 a day, an increase of 7 per cent. Readership of *The Daily Telegraph* fell by more than 200,000 (8 per cent) and of *The Independent* by 162,000 (17.5 per cent).

Chilly prospects for Bank Holiday

By ADAM FRESCO

TENS OF THOUSANDS of Britons headed abroad yesterday for the May Day Bank Holiday weekend.

For those staying at home, temperatures were not expected to exceed 10C (50F), and motoring organisations last night reported heavy traffic on all the major routes, but no large jams. Keith Betton, a spokesman

for the Association of British Travel Agents, said about 250,000 people were going abroad. "Spain and Portugal are favourite destinations and many people are also taking a city break with Paris, Amsterdam, Venice and Rome popular spots."

Stena, the ferry company, said it would be busier than normal, carrying about 100,000 on its continental routes this weekend and about

50,000 on its Irish Sea crossings. The AA expected nearly five million drivers to take to the roads over the weekend.

Lynn Healey, a spokeswoman, said: "If it does turn out nice over the weekend then you can expect heavy traffic to the coastal areas." But forecasters are predicting an Arctic chill, with some showers.

Forecast, page 22

5,000 jobs go in insurance merger

Up to 5,000 jobs are to go in the biggest shake-up in the insurance industry for more than a decade after Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance announced plans to merge.

The new company — Royal Sun Alliance — will be the biggest general insurer in Britain, with 16 per cent of the market. It will be twice the size of its nearest rival, General Accident. Page 23

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(of our great grandfather)

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THE TIMES ON MONDAY

14 PAGES OF TIMES SPORT

FERGUSON v KEEGAN
Rob Hughes on the Premiership title finale

PLUS: Full guide to Bank Holiday racing, and Oliver Holt on the San Marino Grand Prix

BABY PSYCHOLOGY
How our children know who they are

THE MODEL ACTRESS
What it takes to make it as a modern British heroine

PLUS: MATTHEW PARRIS, COLUMNIST OF THE YEAR

Beef farmers take Europe to court

By MICHAEL HORNSBY
AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

FARMERS and meat exporters launched a legal challenge to the European Union's ban on British beef yesterday. Their High Court action came as the Government's planned slaughter of cattle over 30 months old ran into deeper trouble.

Mr Justice Turner said the challenge required a ruling from the European Court of Justice on whether the export ban, imposed after the BSE scare, was disproportionate and a misuse of power under the Treaty of Rome. The challenge was initiated by the National Farmers' Union, but the judge allowed the International Meat

Trade Association and the British Association of Sheep Exporters to make their own appeals because of the knock-on effect on all meat exports.

The NFU will lodge its appeal with the European court next week, arguing that the ban, which has halted exports worth £600 million a year, was illegally imposed in an attempt to allay consumer panic and not because of a scientifically proven risk to human health.

At home, the cattle cull may not get fully under way for a further week or more. Livestock auctioneers are threatening legal action because they say the scheme is weighted unfairly against them. Supermarkets have

caused further delay by refusing to take beef from abattoirs that also slaughter the older cattle.

Martin Burt, a farmer in North Yorkshire who chairs the NFU's livestock committee, said: "It is frustrating. We should be up and running by now, but nothing is happening. The Ministry of Agriculture is behaving like Pontius Pilate and washing its hands of the whole mess."

"We need a central co-ordinating body, such as the Meat and Livestock Commission, to take charge of the allocation of animals for slaughter, otherwise we could face chaos if everyone offers their animals at once. But the Government says it is up to

the industry to sort out its own problems."

The £630 million slaughter scheme should have begun on Wednesday. The Intervention Board, the Government agency administering it, has licensed 105 auction markets as collection points and 44 abattoirs to slaughter them.

Scotland yesterday became the only place in Britain to report the slaughter of animals over 30 months, at an abattoir in Larkhall. Slaughterhouses and markets elsewhere said they still had no clear instructions.

Auctioneers are furious because they calculate that farmers will get up to £100 an animal more in compensation if they send over-age bullocks

directly to an abattoir than if they send them to slaughter via an auction market and are paid liveweight.

Jim Watson, managing director of Midland Marts, which owns the Banbury market in Oxfordshire, the biggest in the country, said: "This is grossly unfair to auction markets which are already in dire financial straits. We're taking legal advice and are considering slapping an injunction on the Ministry of Agriculture unless they agree to top up the liveweight payment."

Tony Baldry, the junior Agriculture Minister, said there were still many logistical problems to overcome. The biggest bottleneck was limited rendering plant capacity.

Crown rule let Howard off hook over Lewis

By RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL HOWARD was able to avoid admitting the wrongful dismissal of Derek Lewis as Director-General of the Prison Service because of a legal technicality. However, the Home Office faces a bill of about £300,000 in compensation and costs after agreeing a payout for Mr Lewis.

A letter from the Treasury Solicitors to Mr Lewis's lawyers said that the Home Office could not admit sacking him, in breach of his contract, "due to the constitutional position of the Crown". It added: "It is accepted that, but for that position, your client's employment was terminated otherwise than in accordance with the terms of his contract. Accordingly... my client is willing to compensate Mr Lewis upon the basis of damages for wrongful dismissal."

The huge size of the bill to the taxpayer emerged yesterday when it was confirmed that Mr Lewis had won a payoff of £220,000. The Government must meet its own costs and Mr Lewis's legal bills of about £50,000 under the terms of the settlement. It has also promised to pay him an additional £20,000 if the Inland Revenue rules that he is not entitled to receive £30,000 of his payout tax-free.



Mary King, who won a team gold at the European three-day event championships in Rome last September when secretly pregnant, showed off her daughter, Emily, aged three months, at Badminton yesterday. Sport, Page 43

Thousands are lottery addicts, says Camelot

Camelot admitted for the first time yesterday that thousands of people could be addicted to playing the National Lottery. Louise White, public affairs manager for the lottery operator, told a conference in Edinburgh that a small percentage of people "are unfortunately spending more than they should" on the draw.

After her speech, she accepted that even a tiny proportion of players could run into many thousands. She also agreed that there was greater concern about scratchcards, with 18 million Instant games sold weekly.

New top judge soon

A new Lord Chief Justice will be appointed within weeks after the announcement that Lord Taylor of Gosforth is suffering from cancer and is to retire early. As tributes to Lord Taylor flowed yesterday, Lord Justice Rose, 59, the only other serving judge who has publicly attacked Michael Howard over his tougher sentencing plans, was being strongly tipped to succeed him.

Al Fayed acquires Viva!

Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods, has bought the ailing all-women radio station Viva for £3 million. It follows his acquisition of the satirical magazine Punch, which is due to be relaunched in September. Stewart Stephens, the chairman of Mr Al Fayed's Liberty publishing company, said it would invest in Viva to make it a "profitable and successful London-based radio station".

Burns victim has baby

Debbie Garbutt, 32, of Loftus, Cleveland, who is seriously ill in hospital after a house fire that killed her daughter, gave birth to a 3lb 3oz girl by Caesarean section. The fire left Mrs Garbutt with 70 per cent burns and her condition in hospital was described yesterday as critical. Her daughter, Jade, aged four, died in the fire on Monday. The baby is said to be doing well.

Sex assault GP jailed

Dr Magdy Omar, a medical adviser to the Egyptian Government, was jailed for six months by Wood Green Crown Court for sexually assaulting a patient. He had denied the charge. Omar, 50, of Southacre, northwest London, was the sole practitioner at Hampstead Medical Centre, which closed six weeks ago. He now faces a disciplinary hearing of the General Medical Council.

Players deny corruption

The footballers Bruce Grobbelaar, John Fashanu and Hans Segers yesterday denied charges of attempting to fix match results. Appearing with them at Winchester Crown Court was Heng Suan, a Malaysian also known as Richard Lim. The full trial, expected to last six weeks, is likely to start in January.

Rhodes to the City

Gary Rhodes, 35, the television chef regarded as the driving force behind the revival of classic British cooking, is to join Gardner Merchant, the contract caterers whose clients include hospitals, industrial canteens and sports events. He is to open a restaurant for the company in the City of London later this year.

Attacker free after a night

Continued from page 1

Mr McCann had successfully prosecuted Simmons for goading Cantona, the Manchester United footballer, into his now infamous lung fu-style kick at the Crystal Palace ground, south London, in January last year.

The Magistrates' Association said prison governors could have kept Simmons in jail for a second night. It added that a recent Home Office directive said prisoners could be released on Saturdays — and expressed surprise that Highdown authorities had not taken advantage of it.

Chief Superintendent Brian Mackenzie, president of the Police Superintendents Association, said Simmons's release highlighted the "judicious" way the criminal justice system had developed. "It sends the wrong signals and a lot of people must just think it is a nonsense."

Lady Olga Maitland, Conservative MP for Sutton and Cheam, said she would be tabling a Commons question next week about "this outrageous situation".

Even in jail, Simmons enjoyed a brief notoriety when prison officers discovered he was attempting to bring in cash in his socks. It is illegal to bring money into prison. Simmons avoided reporters outside the jail at Ilana. He was believed to have been brought out in the back of a blacked-out prison van.

Back at the family home in Thornton Heath, south London, his mother Jackie and brother David refused to comment. Simmons stayed away from the terraced house but spoke to his solicitor, Sonia Simms, on the telephone. She said he was surprised to have been released so early and was still considering an appeal against his conviction for threatening words and behaviour.

Neither Mr McCann, 56, nor his wife Mavis would comment on Simmons's early release. However a family friend when told of the news, said: "Oh, no. What, this morning? It is incredible."

Leading article, page 19

Times names cub reporters

TODAY 1015, The Times's weekly magazine for young readers, introduces the six winners of its Young Reporters Competition. Each will have the opportunity to join journalists from The Times and to write for 1015. The winners and their chosen subjects are: David Freedland, 14, from Hamilton, Strathclyde (politics); Lowri Lwyd, 12, from Luxembourg (foreign news); Alexa Kellow, 13, from West Sussex (home news); Zoe Keniston, 15, from Edinburgh (books); Ben White, 12, from South Harrow, London (sport) and Emma Wales, 15, from Clwyd (music). Zoe Keniston's first article appears today in 1015, inside the Magazine.

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Judge bars gay couple adopting

After 1,500 takes her te



Margaret Page poses for Brenford Bonadie's camera, left. His wife then joins her for another photograph, in which the water can be seen building up behind them. Five seconds later the two women were swept to their deaths

Pictures capture last moments before women drowned

BY TIM JONES

TWO holiday snapshots showed yesterday how a freak wave rushed towards two unsuspecting tourists at a Caribbean waterfall. They were taken by a husband who saw his wife and her best friend swept to their deaths only seconds later.

Josephine Bonadie, 58, and Margaret Page, 48, were halfway through their three-week holiday in St Vincent when the 20ft wave crashed down the Trinity Falls and carried them away. Brenford Bonadie, 65, whose wife of 36 years was buried yesterday, said: "At first it was so calm and beautiful

and the next minute all this water came from nowhere. It all happened in just a few seconds. All I could do was watch them being thrown into the water.

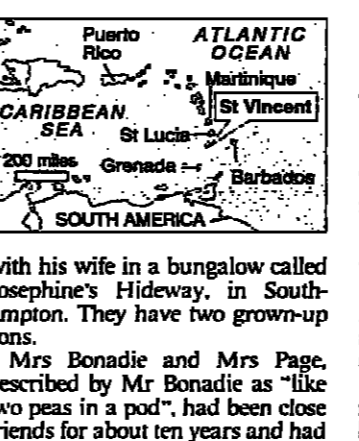
"I gave Margaret a stick to hold on to, but then she shouted 'Jo' and left to try and help her. I watched in horror as my wife and Margaret were pulled under. I ran down to the water's edge, but there was nothing I could do. I could only watch as they were battered and whisked away. It was beyond my control."

His brother, Winston, 52, ran to summon help. The bodies of the two women were found later down-

stream. "We had been having a wonderful day," he said. "Margaret went and stood on a rock with the waterfall behind her. I snapped a picture of her and then Jo went to join her. They sat down on the rock and Margaret took her hat off. They were both grinning and looking really happy and I took another snap. I didn't notice the water was suddenly surging. I hadn't heard a thing, not even a rumble. There was no warning. It was as if the water had been hiding behind a rock and suddenly surged over the top and dropped right behind them." His wife managed to swim to the edge, but could not

hold on to the slippery rocks below the 150ft falls. Still wearing her sunglasses, she was dragged down. "It all happened so quickly. There was no time for any of us to move before the water lashed down on them," Mr Bonadie said.

British Embassy officials told him that the accident had happened because of heavy overnight rain in the mountains. "When I was a kid in St Vincent and it rained heavily the water used to come from the mountains and fill the rivers," Mr Bonadie said. "But the water would be dirty, so there was some warning. This time the water was clear." Mr Bonadie lived



worked at the same company in Southampton before Mrs Bonadie left to set up her own company. They were both excited by the prospect of the holiday, Mr Bonadie said. "Jo had been to the Caribbean before, but Margaret had never been, so it was a really big thing for her."

Mrs Page, from Eastleigh, sent a postcard to her neighbour, Diana Mills, the day before she died. Mrs Mills, 42, received it three days after hearing of the deaths, which occurred on Tuesday last week.

"I had already cried over Margaret when I first heard she'd gone, but this just brought the tears

flooding back," she said. "It was eerie to think she had posted it only the day before she died." The card read: "Wow — what a place — we are staying in a lovely villa overlooking the whole of Kingstown, St Vincent. Hope to go to Mustique for a couple of days — See you when I get back — probably before this card arrives!! Luv Margaret."

Mrs Page, who had a grown-up son, had been company secretary at Zillwoods Signs for more than 30 years. David Zillwood, a director, said: "Everyone here is devastated. Although Josephine left us, she was always popping in to see Margaret. They were inseparable."

Judge bars male gay couple from adopting child

BY GILLIAN BOWDITCH, SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

A HOMOSEXUAL couple's request to adopt a five-year-old disabled boy they have spent 18 months caring for was quashed by a judge yesterday. The refusal, despite backing for the couple by social workers and a lawyer acting for the boy, is believed to set a precedent in Scotland.

The 32-year-old male nurse and his 35-year-old partner of ten years, who cannot be named for legal reasons, were refused permission in a written judgment by Lord Gill in the Court of Session in Edinburgh.

The two men have fostered the boy, who is severely disabled mentally and physically, since November 1994. He has been in the care of Manchester City Council since the age of two months.

Lord Gill said: "The unusual nature of this proposal makes it particularly important that the court should consider whether the child's emotional and psychological needs will be adequately met at each stage of his childhood."

The court heard that the boy's mother, who lives in Manchester and who is not married to the boy's father, has taken no interest in the adoption proceedings and appears to want no further contact with her son.

Last night Jim Murphy, the director of Manchester social services, said the boy would remain with the couple and an appeal was being considered. "The child has been with the couple for a considerable length of time and with the full knowledge and agreement of the natural mother. The child

Court puts monks' fish traps back in business

BY ROBIN YOUNG

THE new owner of an historic castle in Cumbria won his fight in the High Court yesterday to be allowed to continue catching salmon in 12th century fish traps thought to have been built by monks.

The traps, known as coops, are at Corby Castle near Carlisle and are believed to have been constructed by the monks of Wetheral Priory on the opposite bank of the River Eden. After the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII, the coops became part of the castle estate owned by the Howard family.

Dr Edward Haughey, who bought the castle from the Howards in April 1994, repaired the coops and a sandstone weir near by. But the National Rivers Authority objected to the work and tried to revoke Dr Haughey's licence to use the coops.

Yesterday Mr Justice Brooke ruled that the authority had no right to refuse the licence. He said the coops, consisting of two wooden frames angled at 45 degrees with a 9in gap at the apex through which the fish swim, were a "privileged fixed engine" approved by statute during the reign of Edward VI on condition that a 7ft gap was left between them to allow some salmon to pass through.

The NRA, which was ordered to pay costs, claimed that Dr Haughey had forfeited the estate's right to use the coops because his repairs to the weir interfered with the flow of the river and funneled more fish toward them. The judge ruled that this argument was "misconceived".



After 1,500 lessons, learner takes her test — and fails

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

A VETERAN learner driver has failed her first driving test after taking 1,500 lessons over 26 years, at a cost of more than £18,000.

Sue Evan-Jones, 45, a mother of three from Yale, near Bristol, failed because she fluffed the emergency stop; she hit the clutch instead of the brake. The test instructor was even less impressed when she ploughed into closed-off roadworks and veered into the middle of the road when reversing around a corner.

She has had more than ten instructors, but none has been able to cure the rising panic that overtakes her when she gets behind the wheel. More times than she can remember, the instructors have ended up pleading with her to pull over so that they can get out.

Drivercraft, a driving school based in Bristol, is now



Sue Evan-Jones: hated the mini-roundabouts offering free lessons and is determined to help her to pass. Vic Leonard, its managing director, said: "We took her right up until her test. Obviously she failed, but she will pass eventually."

Mrs Evan-Jones admitted: "I get very nervous behind the wheel. If I do something

wrong, I just start shaking and my mind goes blank. I don't like mini-roundabouts or reversing round corners because it gets confusing, with the back of the car acting like the front.

"Before the test started I felt absolutely terrified and as soon as I missed the emergency stop I went to pieces. I know it has cost me a fortune to get this far, but I won't let it beat me. I'll pass my test soon."

Her husband David, 47, a civilian worker with Avon and Somerset Police, rarely ventures out with her when she is driving. He loses his temper too often.

Her instructor, Nick George, 46, said: "She can definitely pass her test. I will go as far as to say I'm sure she will get her licence next time."

Mrs Evan-Jones is so confident that she has already bought herself a car: a blue, £reg, Austin Metro.

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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Blacklisted schools at risk of failing pupils will be inspected every term

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

MORE than 2,000 schools on the brink of failing their pupils are to be named and inspected every term.

Ofsted, the school inspections agency, currently identifies only the few schools it believes clearly fail to provide a suitable education. Under plans to inspect most of the 24,000 schools in England and Wales every six years instead of four, the 10 per cent believed to be at risk of failing will be named as having "serious weaknesses".

Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, said the agency had to focus on raising standards, even if that meant highlighting negative aspects. "Surely, in the interests of the children, these schools have to be identified, whatever the potential impact on the morale of the staff and the standing of the school in the community."

Inspections will concentrate on fewer subjects once all schools had their first Ofsted assessment, Mr Woodhead said. Visits will focus on English, mathematics and science in primary schools and up to another four subjects in secondaries. Schools will be consulted on the part they will play in choosing which four are chosen. Schools will be regarded as having serious weaknesses if inspectors find

unsatisfactory standards in four or more subjects, or unsatisfactory teaching in more than a quarter of lessons. Other factors to be considered include behaviour, management, value for money, truancy and expulsions.

Ofsted has named 120 schools as failing — about 2 per cent of those inspected so far. Seven have been taken off the list because they improved and Hackney Downs, east London, was closed on the

How well do our children read? A two-part series beginning in The Times on Tuesday

advice of a government team.

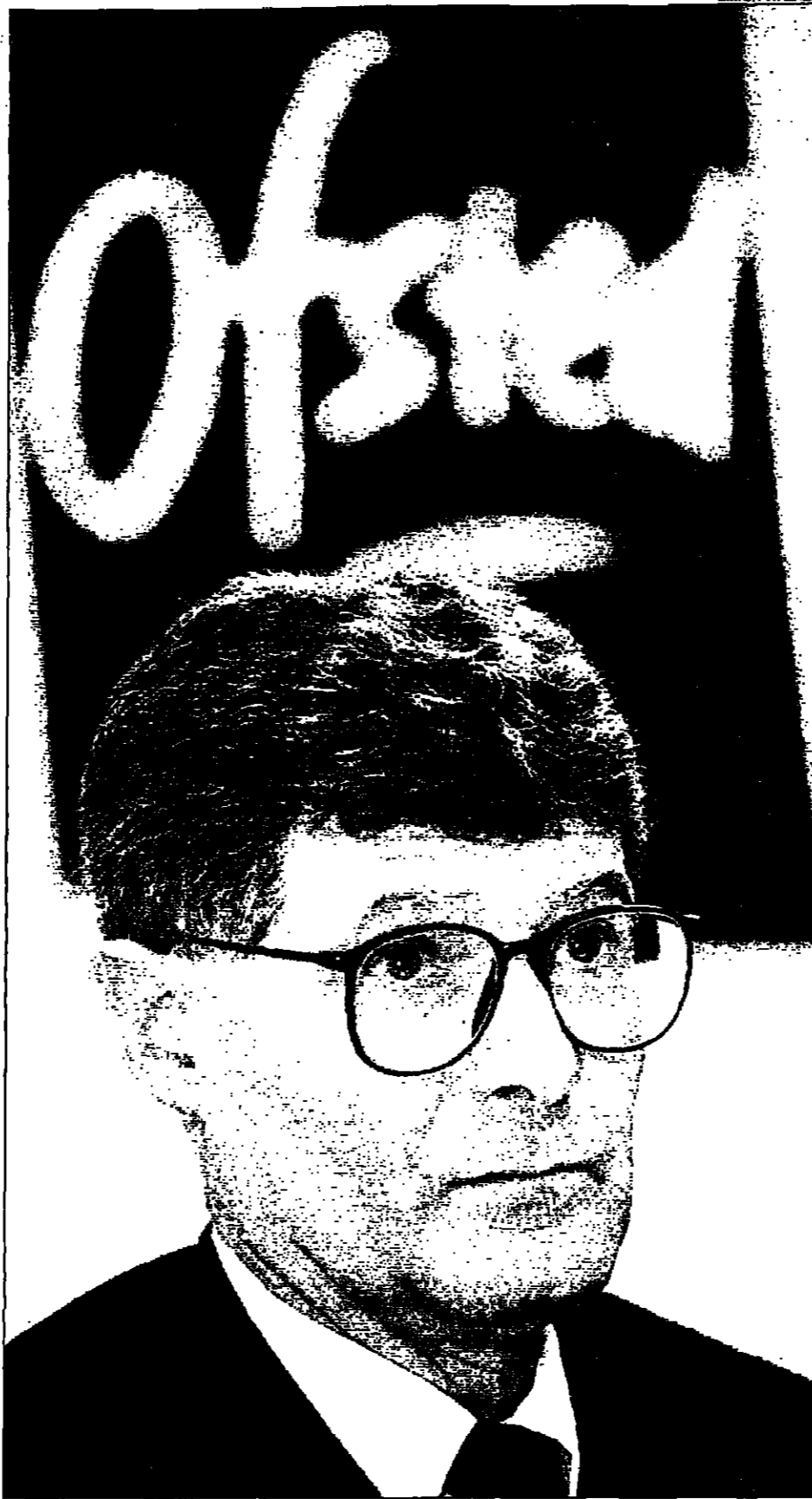
David Blunkett, the Shadow Education and Employment Secretary, said the new arrangements were an "admission of failure" by Ofsted on the original scheme of four-yearly inspections. "Ofsted missed its target for primary inspections by a quarter in 1994-95 and by a third for special schools and has not recovered since. That is the main reason for the change," Mr Woodhead yesterday dismissed claims by three

London boroughs that he showed political bias in putting a negative slant on the final draft of a reading survey. The survey revealed that three quarters of seven-year-olds in the boroughs had reading standards lower than the average for their age.

Mr Woodhead said: "There is a continuing debate as to whether we present the information accurately and honestly. We are quite clear that we do. In re-drafting our reports, I wanted to ensure that the messages which are profoundly important to everyone interested in education are understood. The language therefore is direct and clear. It is not deliberately pillorying teachers in those boroughs."

Tower Hamlets, one of the three councils involved in the Ofsted study, said yesterday that it feared the research had been "hijacked for cynical political reasons". Instead of being used to raise reading standards it now appeared to be being used "as a stick to beat teachers around the head with".

Abdul Asad, chairman of education in Tower Hamlets, said: "It is a total abuse of the trust and the spirit of co-operation that was created between all those who compiled the data."



Chris Woodhead: said that lowering teachers' morale was a price worth paying

Dons decry rise in teaching by untrained research staff

By DAVID CHARTER

FIRST-YEAR university students are more likely to be taught by untrained senior students than by staff, lecturers said yesterday.

A survey by the Association of University Teachers shows that student numbers have grown faster than the numbers of qualified teaching staff. Research students are paid as little as £2.79 an hour for teaching and fewer than one in three has been trained to teach. The survey concludes: "Anecdotal evidence suggests that, in many institutions, first-year undergraduate courses are almost exclusively taught by research students." In a report to be submitted

to the Department for Education and Employment, the association acknowledges that teaching duties have long been recognised as giving research students experience. It adds: "Their use has clearly gone far beyond a reasonable limit."

David Trieman, general secretary, said: "They say that in the country of the blind the one-eyed man is king. But what an absurd principle for recruiting teachers in our leading universities." A teacher-training college which is now part of the University of Lancaster was judged to be failing its students by government inspectors yesterday.

The former Charlotte Mason College, now the Depart-

ment of Teaching and Education Studies at Lancaster, is the first primary school training centre to be failed by the inspectors. It was given the lowest grade in all four inspection categories.

The inspectors said that a high proportion of students seen were not competent in teaching reading and had significant weaknesses when assessing and recording pupils' progress in English. The mathematics course gave "inadequate coverage" of many elements.

The university must now draw up a recovery plan for the department and present it to the Teacher Training Agency, which may consider removing its accreditation.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Soldier ambushed and robbed of rifle

A soldier was ambushed and robbed of his rifle and motorcycle by a five-strong gang on a remote road in Northumberland. The messenger from the 8th Royal Logistical Corps was taking part in an exercise when the gang drove up alongside him close to Alhamrie Barracks, near Heddon-on-the-Wall. Police later recovered the motorcycle and assault rifle from a house in the West End of Newcastle upon Tyne. Seven people were arrested.

Rape sentence increased

A nine-year sentence on a rapist was increased to life imprisonment yesterday, when the Court of Appeal upheld an objection by the Attorney-General that the Old Bailey had been "unduly lenient". Orlando Baker, 30, of Earls Court, west London, had been free only two months after a sentence for assault when he trapped a woman in his room at a hostel and raped her six or seven times in two hours.

Challenge to immunity

Windsor and Maidenhead council is to press for the abolition of Crown immunity, by which the Duke of Edinburgh was allowed to fell a stand of ancient oak trees in Windsor Great Park last year without seeking planning permission from the council. Crown immunity is not restricted to the Royal Family and extends to government buildings and estates.

Memorial row payout

A couple who claimed that a planned 3ft street memorial to a murdered policeman in Clapham, south London, would devalue their house are to receive £1,400 from Lambeth Borough Council. The Tory opposition claims the money is compensation for public criticism that the couple brought on themselves. PC Patrick Dunne was shot in October 1993 while investigating the killing of a drugs dealer.

Herald admits error

The Catholic Herald apologised yesterday for publishing an article by the novelist Alice Thomas Ellis, which accused the late Archbishop of Liverpool, the Most Rev Derek Worlock, of driving people away from the Church. Harry Coen, assistant editor, said he had made an "error of judgment" in using the article, which he admitted had caused widespread distress.

Advert 'exploits doctors'

Dr Ian White and Dr Robin Russell Jones, consultant dermatologists at London hospitals, have accused a cosmetics company of "cynical exploitation" for using their names without permission to promote a moisturiser. Advertisements in women's magazines for Cyclax, made by Worth Fragrances and selling for £3.25 per 100ml tub, said the two doctors had stated that all moisturisers were the same.

Dunblane fund stolen

A fund launched in Aberfan for the victims of the Dunblane massacre has been stolen from the post office. Hundreds of pounds had been raised by the people of the Mid Glamorgan village, where 144 children were killed when coal slurry buried their school 30 years ago. Chief Inspector Tommy Page of South Wales Police said: "We're disgusted. It's a diabolical crime."

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Four patients by fault they have

Acquittal raises doubts on sp camera evidence

RICHARD DAWKINS

MOUNT...

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Four patients cleared by faulty test told they have Aids virus

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

FOUR people who were wrongly cleared of having the Aids virus by a faulty test have been told they are HIV positive after all. Last night the Health Department said efforts would be made to trace sexual contacts.

"We will advise them to talk to their partners, or a doctor or health visitor would be happy to do it for them," said a spokesman.

The four were among more than 20,000 people whose blood samples were re-examined after the American-made test, IMX HIV/HIV2, was withdrawn on March 25. European clinics had reported inaccurate results and a doctor in Portsmouth found it registered negative on a patient with fully developed Aids. It had been used by some NHS laboratories since July 1995, with 23,620 blood samples registering negative.

The Health Department issued an alert before the Easter Bank Holiday, warning test

patients that they could not rely on the results.

Yesterday, Sir Kenneth Calman, the Government's Chief Medical Officer, said that 20,900 samples had been available for retesting: "Four false negative samples have been identified and the individuals have been contacted for further investigations. I would like to extend my sympathies to these individuals in what must be a very difficult situation."

Of the 2,720 with no stored samples available, about 800 people checked at NHS clinics were being invited to provide fresh samples. The remaining 1,920 were private tests, mainly for insurance purposes and visa applications and considered to be low risk.

The Aids charity, the Terence Higgins Trust, said responsibility for the errors lay with the Chicago-based manufacturers, Abbott Laboratories. The test has also been used in Europe, South Amer-

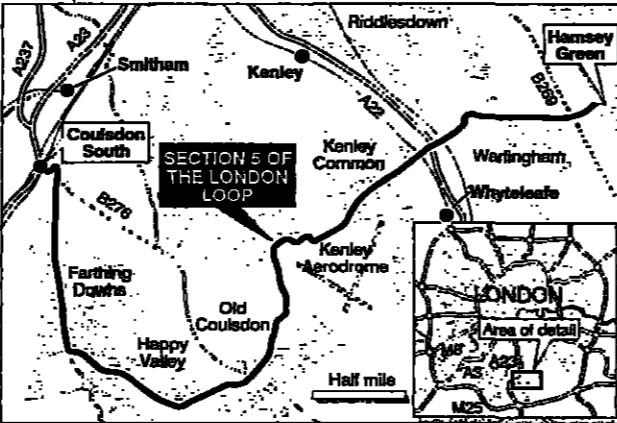
ica and Asia. Tom Lawson, spokesman for the trust, praised the Health Department for ensuring that the retesting was carried out quickly.

He added: "This has been a very stressful month for more than 20,000 people which has resulted in very distressing news for these four. It must be absolutely crushing for them and their families, and it could have tragic implications for their sexual partners."

Terry Donovan, a specialist in medical negligence and HIV law at London solicitors Bolts Burden, said anyone affected by failures in the test could have a case against the manufacturers: "Those who have potentially the largest claims are the partners of the four who may have become infected as a result. But they would have to prove a breach of the duty of care by showing that the manufacturers weren't as diligent as they should have been."



Members of the Downlands Countryside Management Project and volunteers take an inaugural walk on the Loop's first section yesterday



Walkers start to encircle capital

By KYLE SMITH

THE first section of a footpath its creators hope will become the walkers' answer to the M25 opened yesterday. The six-mile section of the 150-mile London Outer Orbital Path is between Hamsey Green in Surrey and Coulsdon South Station. Most of the planned route will be on public rights of way.

Alec Baxter Brown, a project manager for the Downlands Countryside Management Project, which has organised staff and volunteers to create the footpath and signposts, believes the Loop could be completed by 2000.

So far about a hundred volunteers have put in 3,000 hours of work on the path. One of them, John Sierra, 70, has spent nearly two years on the signpost schedule. "That

entailed working out exactly where each signpost had to be placed. I reckon I walked about 400 miles and the route is only 15 miles," he said.

Funding support for the first section came mainly from the Borough of Croydon, the Corporation of London and Tandridge District Council. Plans are already under way for a second path inside the Loop, to be called the Capital Ring.

Acquittal raises doubts on speed camera evidence

By KEVIN EASON, MOTORING EDITOR

THOUSANDS of drivers could challenge their speeding convictions after it was discovered that police sometimes enhance evidence from roadside cameras.

The RAC said yesterday that a recent case in which police speed camera evidence was ruled inadmissible by magistrates because photographs were enlarged opened a loophole in the law.

Police have traditionally printed speed camera negatives to a standard format. But sometimes, when number plates have been unclear, the size has been increased. The motoring organisation estimates that enlargement may have taken place in up to 40 per cent of about 40,000 cases in which motorists were convicted using Gatso cameras, which snap motorists as they drive by.

Edmund King, the RAC's campaigns manager, said: "This case has enormous ramifications for many motorists. While we cannot condone speeding in any circumstances, the evidence brought against motorists must be clear, unequivocal and consistent."

"Clearly, if the police are enhancing images taken from

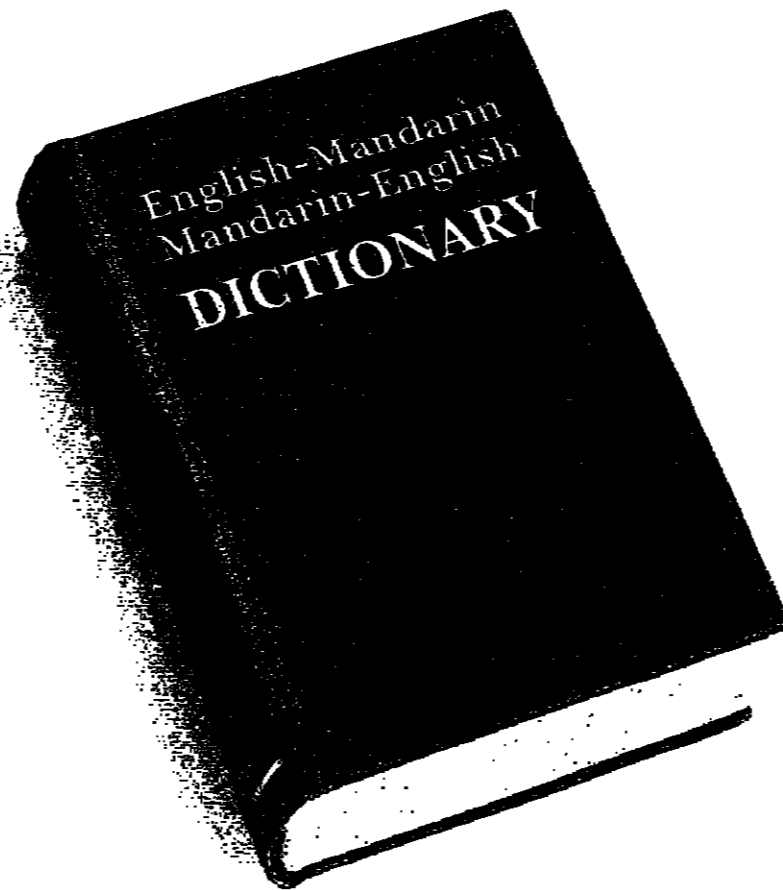
Gatso cameras, then they are tampering with the evidence. We now discover that this type of enhancement or enlargement is widespread among police forces."

The case studied by the RAC was at Uxbridge Magistrates' Court in west London and involved a businessman accused of exceeding a 60mph temporary limit on the M25 in Surrey. His solicitor successfully argued that the picture was enhanced to make the number plates more readable and that evidence produced only directly by the speed camera was admissible.

Mr King said that motorists convicted in the same circumstances, who have been charged fixed penalty fines, should contact the police force involved or, in the case of a trial, the court, to question the validity of their convictions.

Police forces are increasingly relying on roadside cameras to slow traffic. In Hertfordshire, for example, accidents along the A505 dropped 46 per cent in 18 months after cameras were installed. They also provide a rich source of income for police: on that same stretch of road, 500 drivers per month are prosecuted, generating £250,000 in fines so far.

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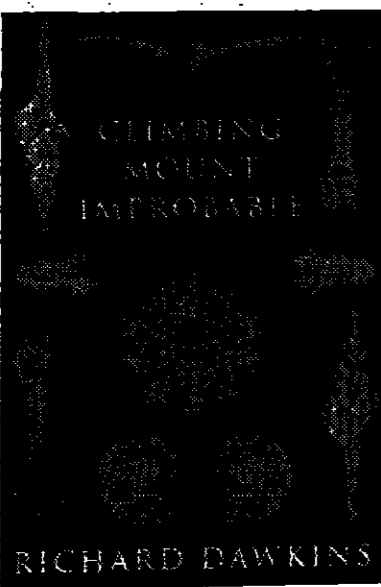


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Michael White, *Mail on Sunday*



Town hall disaster will sap Tories' campaign strength

BY IAN MURRAY AND JAMES LANDALE

THE Tories have virtually been wiped off the local government map of England after two years of disastrous election results.

Thursday's defeat leaves them with no representation on more than fifty councils after losing their last seats on 21, including several former Tory strongholds. On five metropolitan councils, the party is down to just one councillor.

Labour won control of 86 of the 150 authorities that held elections this week, taking control of ten that were previously held by the Tories. The Liberal Democrats ended up with an absolute majority in 23 councils, a gain of five. The Tories held three of their four councils and will have to rely on the casting vote of the mayor to retain control.

Councillors are among the most effective Tory party activists and many marginal constituencies will feel their loss at the general election. When the Tories won power in 1979, they had 12,143 councillors.

On Thursday Labour won 1,750 seats, a net gain of 434, and the Liberal Democrats won 636, a gain of 143. The number of Tory seats was halved from 1,055 to 518.

The outcome means that Labour now runs 212 of the 465 authorities in England, Scotland and Wales, including

13 shadow councils just elected to set up new unitary authorities. The Liberal Democrats control 55 councils, and the Tories 13. With a total of 11,000 councillors, Labour has more than the 5,100 Liberal Democrats and 4,400 Tories combined. The Tories failed to win control of any of the new unitary authorities that take over in their areas from next April. This is frustrating for them since the councils were created on the initiative of Michael Heseltine when he was Environment Secretary.

Yesterday Peter Hilton, one of the remaining two Tories who lost their seats on Manchester City Council, said: "This will do nothing to enhance democracy as there will be no real opposition to debate with Labour."

Nina Hannaford, who was the last Tory on Newcastle upon Tyne council until her defeat this week, said: "I guarantee that if there is a Labour Government next year, Tory councillors will be back on the city council 12 months later. One year of Labour rule will bring the people flocking back to us."

Senior Tory officials and activists said that their losses would not prove to be a fatal blow to the party machine. Although they admitted that many MPs were now isolated, they said that the more than

500 defeated Tory councillors would continue to provide back-up for their local associations.

The 21 councils from which the final Tory members were ousted on Thursday are Cannock Chase, Halton, Harlow, Hastings, Hereford, Knowsley, Lincoln, Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Norwich, Oldham, Oxford, Salford, Slough, South Herefordshire, Stevenage, Stoke-on-Trent, Tameside, Tamworth, Weymouth & Portland and Wigan. One Tory councillor remains on each of five councils: Basildon, Gateshead, Sheffield, Liverpool, Barnsley, and St Helens.

Ron Watson, chairman of the Tories' National Local Government Committee and leader of the Tory group on the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, said: "Conservative councillors provide the backbone, the troops on the ground in many associations. These people are an asset to the Tory party and they need to be kept on board."

"We need to try and encourage our defeated councillors to hang in there and work on the ground and use the time they would have spent on council business to fight for the Conservative party."

Kenneth Baker, page 18
Leading article, page 19

THE GENERAL ELECTION ABYSS FACING MAJOR

50 Tory seats lost in a general election: The first to go

1 Walter Sweeney, Vale of Glamorgan	Forsyth	Cumie	Coe
2 Michael Forsyth, Stirling			
24 Nirj Deva, Brentford & Isleworth			
26 Edwina Currie, Derbyshire South			
28 Dame Angela Rumbold, Mitcham & Morden			
46 Ian Lang, Galloway & Upper Nithsdale			
50 Seb Coe, Falmouth & Camborne			
56 Sir Ivan Lawrence, Burton			
60 Tony Marlow, Northampton North			
69 Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, Edinburgh West			
74 Malcolm Rifkind, Edinburgh Pentlands			
84 Rupert Allason, Torbay			
92 David Evans, Wexley & Hatfield			
100 Jacqui Lait, Hastings & Rye			
122 David Mellor, Putney			
124 William Waldegrave, Bristol West			
128 Ann Winterton, Congleton			
130 Michael Howard, Folkestone & Hythe			
145 Norman Lamont, Harrogate & Knaresborough			
157 Hugh Dykes, Harrow East			
172 Roger Freeman, Kettering			
182 Sir Marcus Fox, Shipley			
189 Tony Newton, Braintree			
191 Jonathan Aitken, Thanet South			
193 David Amess, Southend West			
205 Virginia Bottomley, Surrey South West			
206 Michael Portillo, Enfield Southgate			
280 Nicholas Winterton, Macclesfield			
295 Sir Edward Heath, Old Bexley & Sidcup			
298 Teresa Gorman, Billerica			
303 John Redwood, Wokingham			
313 John Major, Huntingdon			

MPs who ask not for whom the bell tolls

BY ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

SOME of the best-known personalities at Westminster face defeat if the rout of Tory councillors is repeated at the general election.

A list of the 50 most vulnerable seats would be headed by Walter Sweeney, whose majority in the Vale of Glamorgan is 19. Nirj Deva, the Tories' only Asian MP, would be out of Brentford and Isleworth after one term.

Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, would be the first big casualty. Stirling, where he has a 703 majority, is the Tories' seventh most vulnerable seat. Ian Lang, the Trade and Industry Secretary, who has a 2,500 majority, is number 46 on the risk list.

Edwina Currie, who has relaunched her career a second time after her attempt to become a Euro-MP was rebuffed in Bedfordshire, has a more lucrative insurance policy. Her latest novel is reputed to be worth ten years of her £34,000 salary.

Dame Angela Rumbold, party vice-chairman in charge of candidates, would have to apply to her own department for a new seat. The double Olympic medalist Sebastian Coe would be out of the running.

John Major would extract one grain of comfort if the losses soared between 50 and 100. Tony Marlow, the Euro-sceptic who was the first MP to call for Mr Major's resignation, would lose Northampton.

David Evans (Wexley and Hatfield), who ran John Redwood's leadership campaign, would also fall.

Malcolm Rifkind, a potential leadership contender if Mr Major resigned, would be out of the race. His 4,300 majority in Edinburgh Pentlands puts him at 74 on the list. Rupert Allason, a thorn in the whips' side, would be another casualty. Like Mrs Currie he would have more time for his lucrative career as the spy writer Nigel West.

If up to 150 Tories were defeated, David Mellor's portfolio of ten consultancies, one of the biggest in Parliament, would shrink with the loss of his Putney platform. William Waldegrave's 6,000 majority in Bristol West would vanish, as would the 9,000 margin enjoyed by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, in Folkestone and Hythe.

If 200 Tories lost their seats, it would be farewell to the Cabinet ministers Roger Freeman and Tony Newton. John Major would be the most prominent survivor but his colleagues on the Opposition benches might not bring him much cheer. Sir Edward Heath would still be there, doubtless with constructive advice for his latest successor.

Michael Portillo and Kenneth Clarke could also stand against a familiar adversary. John Redwood has in Wokingham one of the safest Tory seats in the country.

Right wing calls for radical policies We are the winners, say Lib Dems

BY JILL SHERMAN
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

SENIOR Tory MPs urged John Major yesterday to adopt a radical right-wing agenda and take a tougher stance against Brussels in the hope of reviving Tory fortunes before the general election.

Backbenchers worried by the Tory rout on Thursday called on the Prime Minister to listen to ordinary party members rather than Whitehall officials. Next week John Redwood, who challenged Mr Major for the leadership last year,

will present a right-wing programme, focusing on law and order, health and Europe. In a pamphlet, *Action not words*, he will call for lower taxation, including lowering the VAT on fuel to 5 per cent. He will also underline the need to take a more sceptical line on Europe, arguing against any further moves towards European integration.

Other leading rightwingers are also calling for a policy shift. Yesterday John Townend, chairman of the 92 Group, demanded a clampdown on the "yob culture" and urged Mr Major to "ride on

the wave of Euro-scepticism sweeping the country". He said: "The great difficulty with a Government that has been in power since 1979 is that it gets swamped in Whitehall machinery and takes more notice of civil servants than it does of the party or the country."

Sir George Gardiner called on Mr Major to give a clear lead after Thursday's "appalling" results. "This leadership must start in Cabinet. He has got to knock some heads together so that ministers sing from the same hymn sheet."

BY ALICE THOMSON
POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Liberal Democrats declared yesterday that they were the only winners in the local elections.

Paddy Ashdown, the party leader, said that Labour had had almost as miserable a night as the Tories. The Liberal Democrats had built the best general election launchpad they had ever had

and were the only party to have exceeded their targets. They were now the undisputed second party of local politics.

"This tops up six years of straight success, year on year, election after election," he said. "The Lib Dems are now genuinely a national party, capable of winning where either of the other two parties govern badly, making progress in every corner of the country and progress against

both of them. We are now the obvious force to remove the Tories in many places where they must be beaten."

The Liberal Democrats took control of six new councils including the former Tory heartland of Tunbridge Wells. They also won seats from Labour in most cities.

Mr Ashdown said that Labour's performance also fell far short of what it wanted to achieve. "People do not want

new Labour to have everything their own way without giving any commitment. They did not blunt the Lib Democrats' advance. They have yet to achieve the confidence of the British people."

Tony Blair, however, has the result as a huge step on road to a Labour government. He warned his party against complacency but said: "This is a brilliant result for us and disaster for the Tories."

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British aid got Hitler's engines back on the rails for Bosnia

FROM STACY SULLIVAN IN TUZLA

STEAM engines that were once used on Hitler's Eastern front have been restored by British engineers to haul vital trainloads of coal in Bosnia.

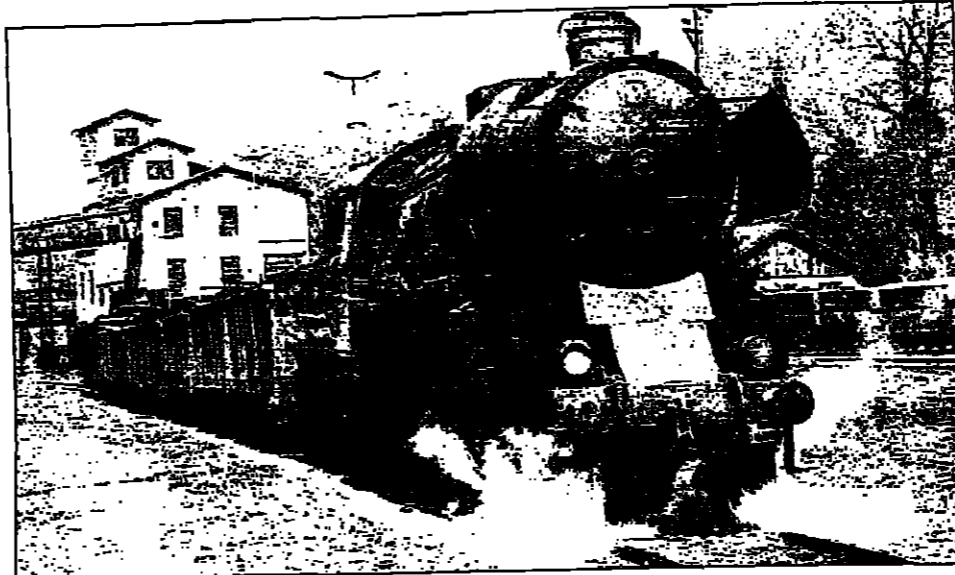
Vintage German engines, under the unlikely patronage of Britain's Overseas Development Administration, have been taken out of sidings and museums and set to work again. Throughout the war they have been a lifeline for the people of central Bosnia, keeping power stations supplied with coal from Tuzla's Kreka mines.

The restoration of the engines, which were the only means of supplying the power plants, provided electricity for nearly a million people.

"Welcome to my museum," proclaimed Mustafa Saracevic, the steam train expert at the Kreka mine, as he gestured towards the blackened Krupp Series 33 steam engine spewing columns of steam and smoke as it chugged past.

Dressed in a blue apron, cap and gloves to protect him from the soot on the trains, he said: "These old grandmothers saved the electrical system of Bosnia. Because of them, we managed to stay alive."

When the war began in Bosnia in 1992, the Kreka mine had just modernised its railway and was using diesel locomotives to transport coal to the region's five power



One of the renovated German trains which were used to take supplies of coal to Bosnia's power stations. "They should be given medals," a railway expert said

plants. But as fighting sealed off key routes into the landlocked country, the diesel supply dried up, virtually shutting down the mine and depriving the region of electricity.

In 1993, Mr Saracevic hauled out the old steam engines and put them to work shuttling coal around the mine. There were 12 of them — eight Krupp trains from Germany made between 1942 and 1945, and four Series 62 Yugoslav trains made between 1952 and 1957.

But because spare parts and a special kind of oil were not readily available, even before

the war, putting them into use was particularly difficult. "We spent so many nights here at the mine trying to create makeshift spare parts so we could get the steam engines running," said Mr Saracevic. "I knew the British still had some steam trains. They are a strange breed and they like their tradition, so I called the ODA and asked if they could help to supply some spare parts."

Mike Bristow, an ODA project engineer in Tuzla, took up the task. "The last time I had seen a steam train was round about the mid-50s," he said. "But there was

no diesel available and by some stroke of foresight, or just plain good luck, these trains were still in operation. They just needed some spare parts and some oil."

The ODA provided white metal for the bearings, gaskets, water-treatment chemicals, oil and lightbulbs for the train workshop at a cost of about 50,000 marks (£ 21,741).

Within about six months all 12 trains were running again. "If it were not for the steam trains, there would not have been any electricity," said Mr Bristow.

Mr Saracevic, who has a picture of his daughter

framed in an old steam train lantern, now calls himself "Bosnia's only steam train expert".

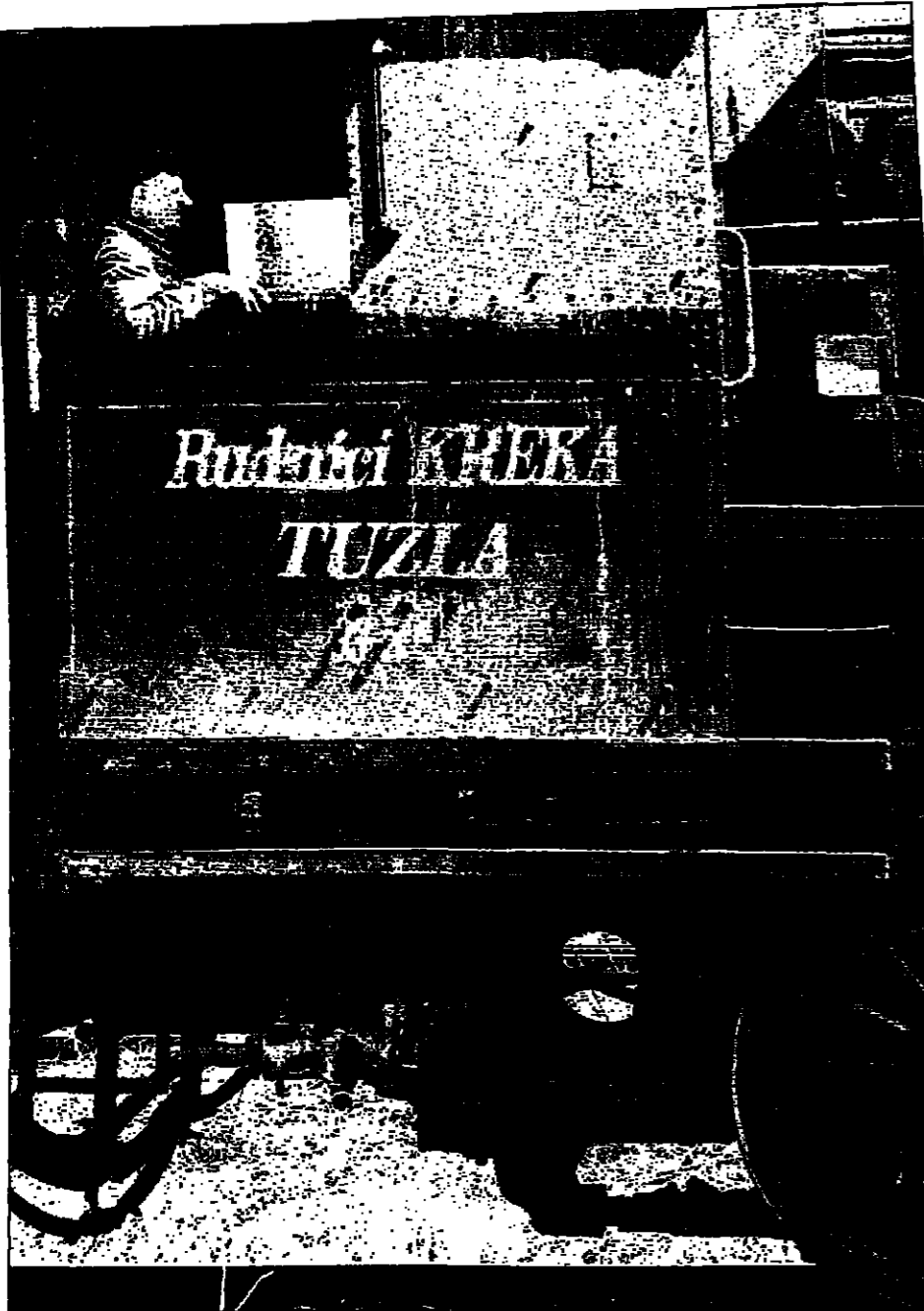
Before the war there were two others. "But they are both Chetniks now," he said, referring to the name for Serb fighters. His desk is littered with brochures from Britain's Somerset and Dorset Railway and photocopies of *Steam Railway Magazine*, which lists companies that sell spare parts.

Before the war, said Mr Saracevic, some Austrians approached him about buying the trains to put in a technical museum in Vienna. "We couldn't sell them because we still needed them," he said.

"Now that the war is over, we are probably going to have to substitute diesels for them soon. We will preserve these and wait for the next war. That is the law here. We have them quite often."

One of the blackened trains chugged past Mr Saracevic's office — a dilapidated building made of corrugated iron perched between the coal mine and the railtracks — and whistled and let out a plume of steam and spray of water before grinding to a halt.

"These steam trains should be given medals," he said. "If it were not for the steam trains, there would not have been any electricity." said Mr Bristow.



Ahmet Divkovic drives a Krupp Series 33 steam locomotive, restored in Tuzla

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Human parts sold in South African witchcraft killings

FROM INIGO GILMORE IN JOHANNESBURG

A REPORT about witchcraft killings in South Africa, based on the findings of a government commission, has exposed grisly details of a trade in human parts for use as "medicine".

The Commission of Inquiry into Witchcraft Violence and Ritual Murders was set up to investigate 140 killings since the beginning of the year in remote areas of Northern Province. The report states that body parts are taken from live victims, their screams said to ensure the magical power of the "medicine". In one incident a human skull was embedded in the foundation of a new building to ensure that business thrived. It was also reported that brews containing human parts were buried on farms to secure good harvests.

Belief in the supernatural runs deep in South Africa and the use of *muti*, medicine for magical purposes, is widespread. Thousands of blacks raise their beds on bricks so the *tokoloshe*, a hairy, sexually insatiable dwarf, will not get to them.

The study found that many young people, even those who are educated, attribute unexpected illness and disastrous events to witchcraft. The commission blamed some traditional healers for contributing to the murders. The victims

were often killed on the instructions of the healers after being consulted by people with grievances against the victims or who stood to gain from their deaths.

Witchcraft and ritual killing, hitherto confined to remote rural areas, have in recent years moved into the urban areas. Last weekend a man was arrested in Johannesburg after allegedly selling a pair of eyes to a police informer. According to the report, human parts needed to perform certain rituals can be found easily in the city.

The report indicates that whites could increasingly become targets of *muti* killings. Several older men who gave evidence believed that medicine which included organs from whites was more effective than that involving blacks because the wealth was in white hands and whites were successful in business.

The report found that remote, rural communities inhabited by poorly educated people were the most notorious for witchcraft. Seth Ntshai, the Security Minister of Northern Province, said the provincial government should embark on an education programme to "mentally liberate" the population. He called for investigations into the involvement of traditional leaders in the killings.

Yeltsin cuts campaign tour after heckling

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT YELTSIN yesterday came face to face with the angry underclass of Russian society determined to vote him out of office when he seeks re-election next month.

During a campaign tour of the ancient city of Yaroslavl, 160 miles north of Moscow, the Russian leader was heckled by unpaid workers and resentful pensioners, who succeeded momentarily in denying the Kremlin chief's confident manner.

"We have not been paid for four months in a row," said one elderly woman in the crowd. She was joined by a younger protester who shouted: "The workers are being squeezed, squeezed."

Later during a wreath-laying ceremony at the city's war memorial, the President was accosted by a World War Two veteran who asked him to pull out of the presidential race. "I will not remove my candidacy," the Russian leader said firmly. "I will struggle for people, for their high living standards, for freedom, not for power."

Most people who turned out to see Mr Yeltsin in Yaroslavl welcomed him warmly. However, he must recognise that a sizeable proportion of the provincial electorate has little or



Zyuganov: gains from discontented voters

no material gain to show for his five years in office and that discontent is likely to be translated into votes for Gennadi Zyuganov, the Communist Party leader.

Experts are divided on the outcome of the presidential race, but most predict it will be a close contest. Mr Zyuganov is enjoying a small lead in most opinion polls, although he will be hard pressed to muster the more than 50 per cent needed to win.

Last night, Mr Yeltsin called off a trip to the ancient town of Vladimir due to take place today. There was no explanation why he decided not to go the town, 100 miles east of Moscow and one of 16 stops he planned this month in a whirlwind regional tour.

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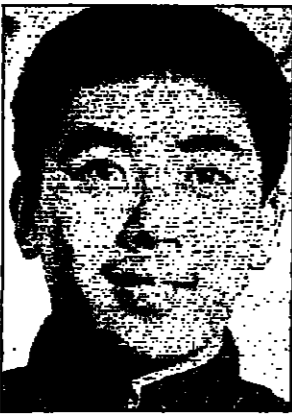
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Blow to Peking as hounded dissident escapes to America

By JONATHAN MIRSKY IN HONG KONG AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

LIU GANG, once China's third "most wanted" political dissident, has escaped to the United States. The White House confirmed yesterday that he had been allowed into the country but declined to say whether he had been granted political asylum.



Liu: will continue fight for democratic China

The 34-year-old dissident escaped from China on April 27 with the help of unidentified international organisations. He arrived in Hong Kong, where he was quickly put on a plane, reaching San Francisco on April 30 en route to Washington.

Mr Liu, one of the leaders of the pro-democracy uprising in Tiananmen Square in 1989, had been jailed for six years. His escape is a severe blow for the Chinese security service, which had kept him under tight surveillance since his release from prison last year.

Yesterday Mr Liu, in an interview with the BBC from Boston, where he is staying with friends, said he fled because he and his family had been harassed by Chinese authorities since his release.

"Even in my home, the policemen [in Lingyuan, Jilin province in northeast China] treated me very bad."

He charged that police tampered with his mail and

telephone line, restricted his freedom to move house, prevented him from finding work or setting up a business and intimidated his friends and relatives. "They watched me all day and came to my room every day," Mr Liu said.

At the Royal Hobart Hospital, where Bryant is being held under armed guard, police have traced many of the threatening telephone calls made to the switchboard over the past few days. The calls have so alarmed hospital staff, that absenteeism has increased dramatically.

Meanwhile Jenetta Hoani, 17, the gunman's former girlfriend, has claimed that he was obsessed with bestiality, violent videos and teddy bears, of which he had 200 in his bedroom. She said Bryant's favourite video was *Child's Play 2*, which features a doll called Chucky that comes to life after killing a boy and taking over his character. *Child's Play 3* was alleged to have influenced the ten-year-old killers of James Bulger, the Liverpool toddler.

Miss Hoani, whose relationship with Bryant, 28, ended three months ago, said that he would undergo frightening personality changes, when he appeared to delight in death and danger.

Bryant had surgery on Thursday for burns. He is expected to remain in hospital for up to a week before being transferred to Hobart's Risdon prison. Bryant, who has been charged with one murder — of Kate Scott — has been remanded to appear in court on May 22.

AS TASMANIANS turned out in their hundreds for the first funeral of a victim of last Sunday's massacre, police confirmed yesterday that they had widened their investigation to include the killer's possible involvement in five other deaths.

Detectives said Martin Bryant could have been linked to at least two stabbings, the disappearance of a German backpacker three years ago, as well as the apparent suicide of his father, Maurice, and the death of Helen Harvey, a family friend, in a car accident in which Bryant was a passenger. Maurice Bryant's body was found in a dam, with his son's diving weight tied round his neck.

In Hobart yesterday about 700 people attended the service for Royce Thompson, 59, who was shot near his bus in



Kate Scott: one of the 35 victims at Port Arthur

Chimps could join the family of man

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

GORILLAS and chimpanzees should be reclassified as members of the same family as man, a group of Australian and New Zealand scientists has urged.

The existing classification, which groups the great apes as a separate genus, fails to take account of DNA studies which have shown the close links between man and some of the apes, according to Dr Simon Easteal, from the John Curtin School of Medical Research in Canberra.

In a paper on human origins and evolution presented on behalf of the group at the Australian Academy of Sciences in Canberra yesterday, Dr Easteal noted that chimpanzees and gorillas share almost all the human genes.

The close similarities mean that classifications based on appearance could no longer be justified. "This is not the first time that revisions to the classification of apes and man has been proposed, but there is a resistance to change among scientists. If adopted, it would place man, chimpanzees and gorillas together in a genus (family) called *Hominidae*, the hominids. At present this family contains only one species, man.

Orang-utans, which are less closely related, would remain in the family called *Pongidae* (great apes). All four species would still form part of the same super-family, the *Hominoidae* (hominoids), which links apes and humans. One objection to such a scheme is that the term hominid, which refers to only man and his immediate ancestors, would embrace African apes as well. A new term would be needed to describe creatures in the direct line of descent to man. *Homininae*, or hominins, has been suggested, but to have hominoids, hominids, and hominins would be confusing.

Hong Kong. Although Mr Liu declared that he would continue to fight for democracy in China, Mike McCurry, the White House spokesman, said he did not expect his case to damage American relations with Peking.

Mr Liu had ranked number three on China's most wanted list of students, behind such leaders as Wuer Kaixi and Wang Dan, after the army crushed the Tiananmen protests with heavy loss of life.

He has been outspoken on human rights. Last year, when police told him to avoid contact with "hostile foreign forces", he replied: "They do not have this information written on their foreheads."

Robin Munro, the Hong Kong director of Human Rights Watch/Asia, said Mr Liu's escape "underscores the fact that there is no space in China for any important dissident figure to survive without being constantly hounded."

News clamp: Peking intends to restrict foreign press coverage of the handover ceremony on June 30 next year when China takes over sovereignty of Hong Kong from Britain. About 6,000 journalists are expected to attend. China has also said the journalists must be vetted.



British players rehearsing their Chinese staging of Hamlet, with the Great Wall standing in for Elsinore and, below, Hamlet taunts Polonius



Hamlet's ghost goes east

By LEYLA LINTON

WHEN the ghost of Hamlet's father appeared yesterday, it was not on the battlements of Elsinore, but a place far removed from Shakespeare's imagination — the Great Wall of China. It was the first time a play has been staged on the wall.

This weekend's three performances in one of the towers near the tiny village of Jin Shan Ling, about 70 miles from Peking, are sold out. The audience has to be fit enough to complete the 15-minute climb to the "stage".

The Peking Players, a semi-professional company that includes British diplomats and several expatriate businessmen, has been rehearsing since January.

Andrew Mallett, a professional actor from Britain who will play Hamlet, said: "The wall is the perfect setting. It is incredible to be open to the elements and see the moonlit turrets against the sky. The sheer scale of the wall inspires me."

Zeba Clarke, a teacher and the director, said yesterday: "We had four major rehearsals on the wall. It is astonish-

ingly user-friendly. The atmosphere is superb in terms of acoustics and views. The turret has windows through which you can see the sunset and mountains." Her husband, Peter, a diplomat at the British Embassy in Peking, plays Claudius.

Mrs Clarke's only concern is the high winds, which could drown out actors' voices and mean "the set may tumble down around our ears".

All profits from the play, which transfers to the Zheng Yici Opera House next week, will help to support the Peking Opera.

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MARTIN WALLER 24 Boardroom ethics and those unexpected tenants

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WORKING WEEK 25 The dream team man in the driving seat



SPORT 37-44 Owner hoping for dividend on 1,000 Guineas investment

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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY MAY 4 1996



Flair for display: Robert Essex, managing director of CA Courts, which yesterday confirmed shares will be priced at 105p each, capitalising the largest in-store display supplier in Britain at £11.2 million when it floats next Thursday on AIM. Clients include Disney, Tesco and Microsoft

Jobs to go in Royal and Sun Alliance merger

BY MARIANNE CURPHEY AND ROBERT MILLER

UP TO 5,000 jobs are to go in the biggest shake-up in the insurance industry for more than a decade after Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance announced plans to merge.

Office of Fair Trading on the ground that the deal was anti-competitive. However, the companies believe their market share is too small to require such an investigation.

Richard Gamble, chief executive of Royal, will become chief executive of Royal Sun Alliance. Roger Taylor, currently Sun Alliance's chief executive, will be chairman of the management board.

The share prices of other insurers shot up as analysts predicted a wave of mergers and acquisitions and tipped Guardian Royal Exchange as the next takeover candidate.

About 11 per cent of the current workforce of Royal and Sun will be shed, saving £175 million by 1998 through staffing cuts and cost reductions.

Michael Meacher, Labour's employment spokesman, called for an inquiry by the

holders would hold approximately 53.6 per cent of shares in the new group and Royal shareholders 46.4 per cent.

Although the announcement surprised the City, the deal was well received. Royal shares shot up 64p to 434p, while Sun Alliance shares rose 57p to 416p.

The news also moved General Accident's price up 33p to 655p.

Guardian's up 40p to 275p, and Commercial Union's up 29p to 619p.

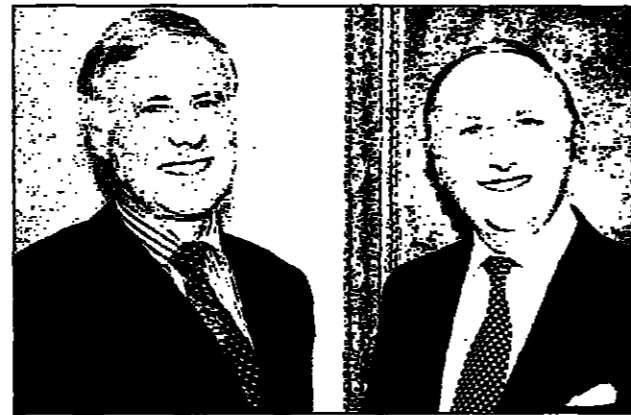
The merger is subject to shareholder. High Court and regulatory approval. Analysts said motor and home insurance premiums might rise because the merged company would not feel under pressure to write unprofitable business.

Under the terms of the merger, Royal shareholders will receive 1.067 Royal Sun Alliance shares for every 1,000 Royal Shares. Policyholders will not be entitled to windfall payments because the two companies are not mutual organisations.

Mr Taylor said: "We are making a dividend forecast of not less than 19p net per Royal Sun Alliance share for 1996."

Based on 1995 figures the new merged company would have worldwide premium income of £9.39 billion, an operating profit of £909 million and pre-tax profits of £1.03 billion.

One crucial area that needs to be addressed is investment performance. Neither party has sparked as a leading manager of retail funds, and in future investment products, including unit trusts, will be sold as much on the back of performance as marketing hype.



Richard Gamble, left, with Roger Taylor yesterday

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Midlands talks to mystery bidder

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE City is anticipating a new £1.8 billion bid for Midlands Electricity after the company confirmed yesterday that it was in talks with a potential bidder.

But speculation was also growing that PowerGen, the electricity generating company, will challenge the Government over its veto last week of the company's £1.4 billion bid for Midlands. Any legal moves by PowerGen, which holds a 21 per cent stake in Midlands, would throw an agreement between the Midlands board and the company's new suitors into doubt.

Midlands refused yesterday to reveal the identity of the bidder but speculation centred on General Public Utilities, the US company, which made a preliminary approach to Midlands earlier this year.

Analysts predicted a takeover bid would be placed between £4.40 and £5.05 a share, based on the price of previous electricity company offers. The Midlands share price last night closed up 38p at 423p, valuing the company at £1.6 billion.

The City also expressed concern about the ability of Midlands's management to drive a fair price, pointing to the £3.71 a share bid the board was prepared to recommend from PowerGen last autumn. The crucial factor in any Midlands bid is PowerGen. The company bought its 21 per cent stake at £3.52p, and is already sitting on a £60 million profit. A decision to support a new bid would facilitate a straightforward takeover. But belligerent comments by Ed Wallis, chief executive of PowerGen, suggest the company is prepared to seek a judicial review of the Government's decision.

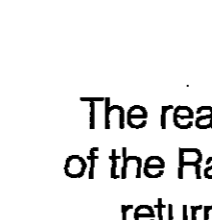
Last night PowerGen refused to comment on its plans.

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WEEKEND MONEY



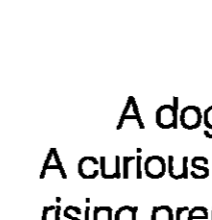
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BUSINESS TODAY

Table with financial data including FT-SE 100, Dow Jones, and various market indices.

Woolwich late with report on ex-chief

BY ROBERT MILLER

THE deadline for completion of a report into the series of allegations against Peter Robinson, the ousted chief executive of the Woolwich, passed yesterday with the building society admitting that it had not been completed.

Since Mr Robinson left his £320,000 post last month, the Woolwich, which has become a prime takeover target, KPMG, the accountant, and Linklaters & Paines, the law firm, have been compiling a confidential report on the allegations against Mr Robinson for the society's board.

lieved to be running into a six-figure sum. It is now understood that the confidential report will contain allegations about relationships that Mr Robinson had with outside suppliers of goods and services to the Woolwich such as cars, cleaners, decorators, gardeners and electricians.

It is also believed that the report will allege misuse of Woolwich-owned property for family purposes. Mr Robinson has consistently denied any wrong-doing. Henry Clinton-Davis of D J Freeman, Mr Robinson's lawyer, said: "It would not be appropriate for me to comment at this time."

Labour activist elected by IoD

BY PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

LEADERS of the free-market Institute of Directors, traditionally seen as a strong supporter of the Conservative Party, have for the first time voted a Labour activist on to the IoD's governing council.

The move by the IoD is a further indication of British business readying itself for the possible election of a Labour government - and another significant shift in the repositioning of the IoD itself.

Michael Craven, a former adviser to John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader, is to join the IoD's 75-strong governing council, which meets quarterly and has responsibility for the overall policy and operation of the institute.

Mr Craven, who is now managing director of Market Access, a political and public affairs consultancy with strong links to Labour, is a well-known figure and backroom operator in Labour circles.

The IoD said Mr Craven had been a member for many years. Michael Mander, IoD chairman, said he would "bring a fresh perspective on our deliberations on a number of important issues".

Mr Craven, currently on business in America, said the IoD's importance was recognised by both leading parties.

Colorvision's founders quit board

BY SARAH BAGNALL

COLORVISION'S battle for survival took a critical step forward yesterday when the founders of the TV and video retailer stepped down from the board, appointed a new chairman and gave him - free of charge - a 20.6 per cent stake in the company.

The moves form part of a radical restructuring by the group to keep its consumer credit licences. In January the Office of Fair Trading stripped Colorvision of its licences due to a series of dishonest practices including supplying second-hand goods as new.

ing and yesterday said the OFT agreed not to contest the appeal if it undertakes a large restructuring and provides assurances on future conduct. The news came as the group gave warning of a swing from a £1 million pre-tax profit to a £4 million loss in the year to March 31.

As part of the agreed restructuring, co-founders Neville Michaelson, chairman, and his older brother, Bernard Michaelson, company secretary, have stood down from the board. They have reduced their holding from 66.6 per cent to 29.9 per cent by giving away shares to three newly appointed directors and a trust for key employees. Sir Brian Wolfson, a former chairman of Wem-

bley, has been appointed executive chairman and given 4.17 million shares in the group, which at yesterday's closing share price were valued at £1.3 million.

Last September Sir Brian parted company with the Wembley stadium group. During his ten years as chairman, Wembley notched up debts of £140 million.

Colorvision has appointed two new non-executive directors: Adrian Collins, who has been given a 2.5 per cent shareholding, and Anthony Rawlinson, a director of Strand Partners, a corporate finance boutique that has been given a 6.8 per cent stake. A further 6.8 per cent holding has been put in trust for key employees. Colorvision's shares rose 14p before falling back to close 6p up at 32p.

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The Roundheads are after the family silver

You have made your pile. You have won the National Lottery, or flogged your biotechnology company for a hundred times' annual losses, or poisoned rich and childless Aunt Maud, who always had a soft spot for you as a nipper.

So you buy the country estate, the 25 acres, the helipad, the works. You install a trusted and competent estate manager to look after it for you for the duration of your world cruise.

You would find it more than disconcerting, I think, to discover on your return that he had sold the tennis court to the Japanese. He had installed a rich sheikh and his entourage in the basement, and was considering a serious offer for the swimming pool. All strictly above board and highly lucrative, the cash piling up even now in your already bloated bank account, he explains, tugging off his check cap. Is there a problem?

This is at the heart of an old debate now revived in the City, because just as you as a household-

er have an absolute right to decide who lives under your roof, shareholders are absolute owners of their company. This is a point often lost on executives drafted in to manage the company's affairs on their behalf, and the annual shareholders' meeting season now under way is not a bad time to remind them of it, I think.

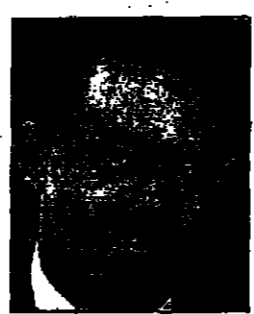
Now, there is a reformist body of opinion that is calling for some of that control to be lessened, in the interests of efficiency and cheap capital. The peculiarly British concept of the rights issue is under attack as outdated and expensive. More streamlined alternatives are being proposed, in particular American-style book-building, putting fresh shares up for a public auction to ensure the best price. The problem here is pre-emption rights, which require, unless the amount raised is relatively small, that all who own the company be offered any new shares on an equal basis at the same price.

This is frequently a confounded nuisance, companies say, especial-

ly those with a huge shareholder base. Consider a hypothetical example. Those companies privatised with large numbers of investors have not yet had to raise fresh funds — they have the stuff coming out of their ears. But suppose a few years down the line one has to.

All those hundreds of thousands of investors, nearly all sitting on a hundred shares and ignorant of their existence except twice a year when the dividend cheques come around, have to be canvassed. Suppose a one-for-four rights issue at two quid. Each has to be mailed a bulky prospectus asking if he or she wants to put a mere fifty quid into the company.

The Roundheads, as we shall call them, want the whole system overhauled to limit the Divine Right of Shareholders. They say it makes the cost of fresh capital too expensive in London, which then risks falling behind compared with other world markets such as New York or Frankfurt, et cetera, et cetera — variations on a theme



MARTIN WALLER

we have all heard before. Pre-emption rights, like much company law, have their roots in the days where companies were largely family concerns that were beginning to bring in outside managers. The idea was to prevent those managers unloading the silver behind the family's back.

What is doubtful is whether a book-building system or any other more "modern" device is cheaper,

if you calculate this in terms of the percentage of the cash-raising exercise that never reaches the company coffers but is diverted to advisers, underwriters and anyone else with their snouts in the trough. But it does enrich the big merchant banks, who tend, oddly, to be in the Roundhead camp.

The Roundheads say capital is more expensive in London than elsewhere. This is not surprising — most things are. In this particular case it has to do with the cost of borrowing, which is higher — government gilts, for example, yield 8 per cent plus, a full two percentage points above their German counterparts, and this is the market in which companies raising cash must compete.

These are powerful arguments, especially in the week that saw the Office of Fair Trading prodded awake from its torpor and sent in again to attack the fixed-fee system of City underwriting, a separate but linked issue. The Roundheads have a further argument, that any rights issue automatically brings

in its train a dividend increase. This is because few companies are prepared to cut payouts just after touching shareholders for fresh cash. It somehow seems churlish. The payout is therefore usually maintained on the enlarged capital, although the value of the last has fallen because the new shares were issued at a discount.

This must push the cost of fresh capital even higher. The counter-argument is put by the Cavaliers, these tending to include the big City institutions who are keen to keep pre-emption rights and who do well from underwriting the present system. They hold large stakes and prefer to have their control maintained. They say dividends should be reduced *pro rata*, so the yield on the shares is consistent. This is fair, even if it leads to the odd position of a big shareholder calling for nominally lower dividends.

The real importance of pre-emption rights is that they are one of the three pillars on which shareholder power rests. Back to

those annual meetings. You can do three things. You can, as the Americans say, kick da bums out by not re-electing the directors. You can kick the auditors out, if you think they are cooking the books too outrageously on behalf of those same directors.

And you can control the raising of fresh capital. This prevents those directors from offloading a huge chunk of the company to their mates from the Rotary club who they know will support them in a fight, without giving you, the owner, a chance to buy in at the same price.

This happens, believe me, in markets that lack pre-emption rights. Incompetent and dishonest American managements have done just this, to spare themselves from the threat of takeover from more competent parties. If we are to throw away this protection for investors in favour of a more streamlined system of cash-raising, then we should be aware of what we are discarding. This argument will run and run.

Mindscape blow for Pearson

By Eric Reguly

SHARES in Pearson slumped after the media and entertainment group revealed higher than expected losses at Mindscape, the troubled American software publisher that specialises in video games.

Pearson said Mindscape would post losses of about \$46 million in 1996, up from \$6.9 million in the previous year. Lord Blakenham, Pearson's chairman, said: "The losses at Mindscape will inevitably cast a shadow over the first half year's performance."

The shares closed at 67p, down 18p.

Pearson bought Mindscape in 1994 for \$462 million, making it one of the group's largest acquisitions. The company quickly went into loss.

Stephen Grabner, managing director of the Telegraph group, is to join United News & Media as executive director of newspapers.

ABC Cinemas set for comeback after £68m buyout

By Clare Stewart

THE ABC Cinemas chain is set to make a comeback in the high street as the result of a £68 million management buyout from MGM Cinemas, part of Richard Branson's Virgin Group.

The new chain will consist of 90 cinemas that are being sold to a management team led by Barrie Jenkins, who until 1993 was head of MGM Cinemas.

The re-emergence of the ABC name comes exactly ten years after it disappeared, when the chain was acquired by the Cannon Cinemas group.

The debt and equity financing of the ABC buyout deal was led by CINVen, the venture capital group. In addition to Mr Jenkins, the three other directors were former members of the MGM or ABC management.

Virgin acquired the MGM group last July from Crédit Lyonnais, the French bank.

The sale attracted strong interest from potential buyers, including Rank, the leisure group that owns the Odeon chain.

Virgin began looking for a buyer for the smaller, high street sites within several months of the purchase in order to concentrate on developing larger multiplex sites.

Mr Branson said: "The deal will enable us to considerably speed up our expansion plans. Since coming into the cinema business in July 1995 we have become even more excited about the future opportunities in this market."

Virgin's accelerated building plans mean it will add 18 multiplex cinemas, to take its total number to 37 in the next four years. These sites will have 11 or 12 screens with seating for up to 5,000.

The eventual aim, a Virgin spokesman said, would be to link Virgin Megastores direct-



Vestments: Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor, arrives at a City ceremony to check the quality of Britain's coinage with Master Turner, the Queen's Remembrancer

Abbey National enters the car finance market

ABBEY NATIONAL is moving into the car finance market with the £108 million acquisition of Wagon Finance Group from United News & Media. Wagon, which specialises in providing finance for used-car purchases, will become part of First National Bank, Abbey National's consumer finance arm.

Wagon has about 5 per cent of the UK used-car market, offering its credit facilities through 5,000 car dealerships. It has a loan book of £350 million.

Tim Ingram, chief executive of First National Finance Corporation, said the acquisition "further diversifies Abbey National's aim of diversifying profit streams away from traditional business areas". Wagon showed record pre-tax profits last year of £12.8 million. Abbey National shares moved 4p lower to 55p, while United News added 6p to 698p.

Fewer insolvencies

COMPANY insolvencies are down 6 per cent on a year ago — a move that business leaders said yesterday was fresh evidence of a sustained recovery in the economy. New figures from the Department of Trade and Industry showed that 3,295 became insolvent in the first three months of this year. The seasonally-adjusted figure is down on the 3,730 company insolvencies of the previous quarter and down on the level a year ago, when the number of quarterly insolvencies was 3,505.

Al Fayed buys Viva

VIVA RADIO, the UK's first station for women, has been bought by Mohamed Al Fayed, chairman of Harrods and fledgling media baron. Liberty Publishing, the recently formed media arm of Harrods Holdings, is buying Viva for £3 million from Golden Rose Communications, the group that runs the Jazz FM station. Viva was launched in July 1995 and has failed to live up to early expectations, drawing poor audience figures. A relaunch is expected.

New Costain warning

COSTAIN GROUP warned investors yesterday that its results would be well below market expectations. Shares in the construction company plunged 10p to 89p on the second profit warning within two months. Costain said its 1995 financial results would again be delayed and are not expected to be published until the end of June. In March, the company said that market expectations were too high and yesterday indicated that some brokers' forecasts were still too high.

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Courtaulds wins battle on patent

By Clare Stewart

COURTAULDS has won an important legal battle over the development of Tencel, its wonder fibre.

A European Patent Office ruling that Lenzing, an Austrian company, held a patent over part of the production of the lyocell fibre was yesterday reversed after an appeal by Courtaulds. The success follows a similar decision in the US, which also rejected Lenzing's patent claims.

Courtaulds disputed Lenzing's claim that part of the production process for lyocell was patentable. Donald Anderson, spokesman for Courtaulds, described the European ruling as "a welcome judgment which simplifies life for us".

Lyocell is produced from natural cellulose in wood-pulp and can be spun into a versatile silk-like fibre, which Courtaulds produces under the Tencel brand name.

Courtaulds has invested more than £300m in bringing Tencel into production and developing the brand, and is a leading manufacturer. Courtaulds shares jumped 11p to 421p on news of the ruling.

Pension review plea

By Robert Miller

PENSION fund managers who look after £350 billion worth of assets were urged by the City's senior watchdog yesterday to co-operate more wholeheartedly in the £4 billion review of the personal pension mis-selling scandal.

Andrew Winkler, chief executive of the Securities and Investments Board, told members of the National Association of Pension Fund Managers on the final day of their annual conference in Glasgow that they should make "a positive effort to re-instate past service at a reasonable cost".

He added that pension schemes, such as those for police officers and nurses, which did accept back members who had been wrongly advised to leave their professional schemes for a personal plan or not join in the first place, should also show how the compensation and costs figures had been calculated.

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A WORKING WEEK FOR: STEPHEN WHATMORE

Polished spirit endures in Q's workshop

Jon Ashworth meets the man behind some of the extras that turn a sleek car into a mobile office or a bespoke armoured vehicle

Monday FOUR years ago, the mighty Vickers engineering group was nearly brought to its knees by the lead weight of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. Today, a leaser and fitter Rolls is powering back into the profits league.

Much of the progress is down to the team at Mulliner Park Ward, the coachbuilding division of Rolls-Royce, and its commercial director, Stephen Whatmore.

Whatmore, 43, drives the team that puts the sheen on the immaculate Rolls-Royce and Bentley marques. From exotic interiors, to fax machines that slide out of hidden compartments, Mulliner Park Ward has the answer. More than 40 per cent of the cars rolling out of the Rolls-Royce factory at Crewe, Cheshire, have the Mulliner Park Ward touch.

The ability to tailor-make the car of your dreams is spurring sales at Rolls, which bears little resemblance to the company of five years ago. Thousands of jobs have gone, assembly lines have been reorganised into units, and even BMW — heavens above — has been brought in to collaborate on a new engine design. Sales of Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars rose 10 per cent to 1,566 last year, pointing to the success of the strategy. Profits at the automotive division, which includes Cosworth engines, nearly doubled to £41 million, fuelling pre-tax profits at Vickers by 67 per cent to £75 million in the year to December 31. Whatmore and his colleagues at the "personalising" end of the business are well aware of their importance to the Rolls master-plan.

Step inside the Mulliner Park Ward showroom, tucked in a corner of the Crewe factory, and a feast beckons. Gleaming Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars await. Mock-ups of steering wheels, and accessories cover the floor, and tantalising sketches line the walls. "It's a little like visiting your tailor," says Whatmore, rubbing an appreciative hand over an immaculate burr walnut veneer. "You would expect him to advise you."

Whatever you want, Mulliner Park Ward can provide it. Some owners want their cars fitted out as mobile boardrooms, complete with fax machine, personal computer, television, video, mobile telephone and drinks cabinet. A few discreet motions — a tuck here, a gentle push there — and the gadgets slide out of view. When one is spending between

£100,000 and £220,000 on a car, one can afford a few optional extras.

Many of the requests stretch the imagination. A European businessman came in and requested the loudest hi-fi ever fitted in a motor car. The team obliged, packing three suitcase-size amplifiers into the boot, and delivering an awesome 240 watts per speaker. The exercise added £20,000 to the cost of the car. "The price is almost the last thing that comes into the equation," says Whatmore. "Customers want satisfaction. They like to feel pride in what they've got."

Owners in the highly competitive German market are tempted by onboard satellite systems, currently on trial in the UK. Drivers programme in their destination and have their route mapped out on a small TV screen. A voice sounding suspiciously like that of the Queen (one of the more famous Rolls owners) commands: "Take the second right after the roundabout."

"I don't think we've ever had two customers order the same car," says Trevor Gay, who is responsible for sales and marketing. "One customer came in to see the base model car. He walked out of the factory with something like £48,000 in extra features." Mulliner Park Ward once converted a Bentley Turbo for the use of a businessman with only one arm. He demanded a duplicate set of instruments to be installed in the rear of the car, guaranteeing a hard time for his hapless driver.

Mulliner Park Ward is a little like Q's workshop in the James Bond films, brimming with gadgets and inventions — and the cars do not disappoint. A closer inspection of one imposing model reveals layers of glass capable of stopping everything from automatic rifle-fire to a round from a Magnum .44 handgun. Bullets will not penetrate, yet a push from within and the glass pops out, allowing the occupant to escape.

Fully protected cars are bullet-proof, blast-proof, and carry separate air supplies to guard against gas attacks. Self-sealing tyres are an option. Staff talk proudly of "retaliatory systems" — a smoke device is as much as they will disclose — and they will not be drawn at all on the "escape systems". One can only guess at what the engineers dream up.

"One of the customer's biggest fears is to return to the car after a night at the theatre to find the window smashed," says Whatmore. "Bricks, baseball bats, pick-axe handles. We offer everything from handgun protection packages to



A dream drive: Stephen Whatmore, seated, and his team at Mulliner Park Ward, the coachbuilding division of Rolls-Royce, provide tailor-made cars

bespoke armoured cars covering all known eventualities."

Whatmore has had a hand in most aspects of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars since joining the company in 1988. An accountant by training, he played a key role in drawing up the company's ten-year business plan two years ago when he was director of business development. His switch to Mulliner Park Ward, working with Jim Orr, the MPW managing director, and a 250-strong team, shows just how important this side of the business is to the wider Rolls management. Whatmore says: "It is the key to maximising the benefits of the Rolls-Royce and Bentley marques."

Sales have picked up sharply in America and the Middle East, and Whatmore is frequently jettisoned off to some exotic destination. He flew in from Detroit on Saturday, in time for an open day

celebrating 50 years of carmaking at Crewe. On Tuesday, he joined colleagues for a brainstorming session at a local hotel. Thursday brought sales and marketing, and yesterday was put aside for plotting the next two weeks. "Every day is a 12-hour day. Every day is full from start to finish."

Visitors to the Crewe factory are taken through the life of a Rolls-Royce or Bentley, watching pistons and crankshafts materialise into engines, and Scandinavian cowhides change into immaculate upholstery. Legendary craftsmen such as Dennis Jones and Tony Kent carve trademark initials on perfectly honed Rolls-Royce and Bentley radiators, taking up to 13 hours on each masterpiece. Stainless steel is twisted in the subtle way to catch the light, then polished to perfection.

Cars and components are allocated

chassis numbers, allowing owners to follow their progress every step of the way. "We've done away with foremen and supervisors; the emphasis is on teams," says Barry Greenwood, who delights in guiding visitors through the plant. "Everyone has become much more accountable. Times change, and you have to change with them."

Rod Tilley, who presides over the paint shop control room, adds: "The guys are all working in teams. There's been a lot of work in the last 12 months towards getting a body shell that's better than ever."

Benefits of the streamlined Rolls are plain to see. The company used to have to make 2,400 cars before it would break even. Now the figure is 1,350. It takes an average of eight weeks to assemble a standard Rolls-Royce or Bentley, compared with 12 weeks in the mid-1980s.

Bentley has the edge, making up 60 per cent of sales. Employees preach "customer value", and typically turn their hands to several jobs.

The tour ends in the luxurious confines of Mulliner Park Ward, where one's imagination is given free rein. Rolls-Royce is famous for never talking about its customers, but a few names have crept into the public arena. What do Chris Evans, Elton John, Frank Bruno and Chris Eubank have in common? They own Bentleys. Dame Barbara Cartland ordered a Rolls-Royce Shadow in shocking pink.

Michael Barrymore stopped by for a visit last year, bringing his poodle. Attentive staff gave the dog the royal treatment. As Whatmore says: "You don't get this type of service from any other car manufacturer." Barrymore's poodle would no doubt agree.

Balancing the past and the present at ANZ Grindlays



Each room in the house contains an original chimney-piece of white marble

IT IS often said that fund managers, foreign exchange dealers and certain specialist brokers can operate anywhere from Miami to Mongolia provided they have access — on the beach or in the paddy field — to their computers and phone lines.

Given the choice, I would be in St James's Square SW1 if I were a fund manager or a foreign exchange dealer — preferably at No 13, next door to the London Library.

ANZ Grindlays has occupied this Grade II listed building since 1951, initially on a leased basis and since 1987 as the freeholder. It has had to be sympathetic to the fabric of the house in installing its computer systems, back-up, and high-performance personnel. All modifications have had to be made

in a style appropriate to the period, but there are elements of a modern bank office that simply cannot be accommodated in such a house.

Andrew Webster, senior manager of property services, says: "It is a case of the usual clash between old-style buildings and modern office needs. We are obviously limited as to the way in which we can modify the interiors. For example, we need things like air-conditioning and proper lighting so we have had to think very carefully about how to adapt and install them sympathetically."

ANZ Grindlays has taken trouble to create an environment that meets a high level

HIDDEN ASSETS

of office comfort and efficiency and is in keeping with the style of the house.

The first house on the site was built in 1676 for Sir Thomas Clarges, but it is thought to have been substantially redesigned in the 1730s by Sir Henry Liddell, later Lord Ravensworth, and to the designs of Matthew Brettingham. Giles Worsley says in *Classical Architecture in Britain, The Heroic Age* that Brettingham was a protégé of Lord Burlington and the executive architect of Holkham Hall in Norfolk. After he began work in St James's Square and until his death in 1769, he was much employed in London and his

designs, many of them with a circuit of rooms round a central staircase, rapidly set the fashion for great London houses.

The Brettingham facade, which is virtually unchanged, is in the English Palladian style, three storeys high and four windows wide, with a doorway flanked by one window on the west and two on the east. In about 1784, John Soane supervised the painting of the exterior. Interior redecoration was done when the 3rd Duke of Roxburgh bought it in 1795.

The Roxburghs occupied the house until 1812. It was then held on various short tenancies until 1836 when it

was sold for £17,500 by the trustees of the Duke of Atholl to the Windham Club, which remained there until 1941.

The oblong entrance hall retains original decorations and Brettingham's hand is visible in the simple pedestal and the Doric entablature of the walls. The east front and back rooms have been knocked into one, and the decorations are largely modern.

Each room still contains an original chimney-piece of white marble in the Palladian taste of the early 1740s. The one in the front room is an Inigo Jones design.

ANZ Grindlays has retained most of the original layout, using the drawing room and library as meeting rooms.

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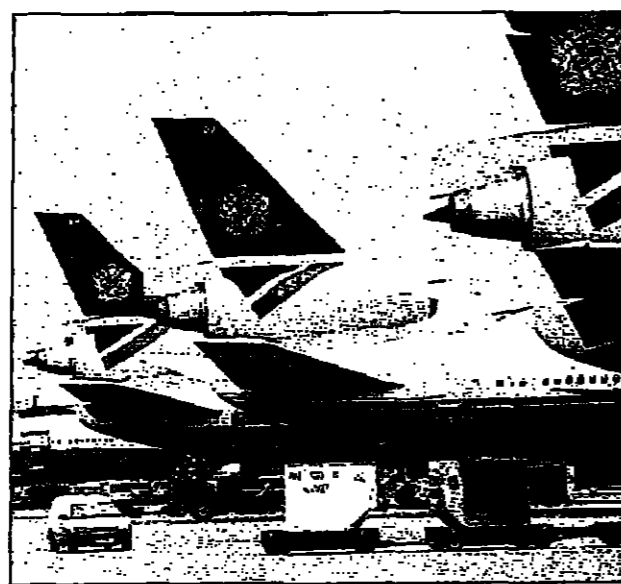
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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Insurance merger helps shake off doldrums

NEWS of the proposed E5.4 billion merger between Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance helped to underpin a nervous stock market and to focus attention on the rest of the insurance sector.



BA's shares dipped after a post-Easter slip in traffic

News of the deal, which is expected to result in savings of £175 million and to create Britain's biggest insurer, caught the City on the hop.

BA's shares dipped after a post-Easter slip in traffic. The rest of the equity market went into an early nosedive, reflecting sharp falls overnight on Wall Street and reaction to the local government election results.

software publishing business, would make a loss of £46 million in the current year compared with previous estimates of around £12 million.

A blunder by the Office of Fair Trading saw shares of Colverson, the television and video rental group, slump to 16p before bouncing back to finish 6p dearer on the day at 32p.

opportunity. City speculators are not ruling out the prospect of a second bidder emerging for C&W, with both Deutsche Telekom and American Telephone & Telegraph mentioned as potential suitors.

There was a renewed flurry of speculative activity among the electricity distributors as its Midlands Electricity, up 38p at 423p, announced it was

It looks like fish, chips and mushy peas are on the menu for one hungry predator. The Stock Exchange wants to know why shares in Harry Ramsden's have soared from 326p to 384p this week.

merger talks with an unnamed suitor. The best bet is likely to be an American utility, with General Public Utilities or Pacific Gas and Electricity both tipped.

British Airways fell 3p to 521p after the post-Easter traffic figures failed to live up to expectations. The group benefited during the run-up to an early Easter, but saw growth subsequently slow.

At the longer end treasury 8 per cent 2015 fell 1/2p to 95 1/2, while in shorts treasury 8 per cent 2000 finished 1/2p off at 101 1/2.

MOVERS OF THE WEEK

Table listing stock movements for various companies like BT, Cable and Wireless, and Midlands Electricity.

COMMODITIES

Table of commodity prices including LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE, CRUDE OILS, and RUBBER.

LIFE OPTIONS

Table of life insurance options with columns for Series, Call, Put, and various dates.

EUROPEAN FINANCIAL FUTURES

Table of European financial futures including FT-SE 100, FT-SE 250, and Three Month Sterling.

MONEY RATES (%)

Table of money rates for various banks and currencies.

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Table of European money deposits for various banks and currencies.

MAJOR INDICES

Table of major stock indices from New York to Zurich, including Dow Jones, Nikkei Average, and FTSE 100.

RECENT ISSUES

Table of recent issues for companies like AIM Distribution, Active Imaging, and Cairn Group.

RIGHTS ISSUES

Table of rights issues for companies like Benmore n/p, Benson Group n/p, and Cap Reg 67% ULS n/p.

MAJOR CHANGES

Table of major changes in share prices for companies like BT, Cable and Wireless, and Midlands Electricity.

DOLLAR RATES

Table of dollar rates for various countries including Australia, Canada, and Hong Kong.

OTHER STERLING

Table of other sterling rates for various currencies and regions.

FT-SE VOLUMES

Table of FT-SE volumes for various sectors and companies.

TEMPUS Running for cover

BEHIND all the back-slapping and triumphant flag-waving that accompanied yesterday's merger of Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance, there lurked a pair of general insurance companies in rather defensive mood.

THE story in the electricity sector yesterday was the dog that didn't bark. News that Midland Electricity was in talks with a bidder sent its share price soaring.

Electricity

THE collapse of merger talks with BT leaves Cable and Wireless under even more pressure to develop a coherent strategy. Does it have ambitions to operate large, telecoms businesses or is it happy in its role as a quasi-investment trust for a loose collection of phone companies?

C&W

Canada International, which owns 20 per cent of Mercury, BCI, in turn, controls Bell Cablemedia, the third largest cable company, and also has a stake in Videotron, the number six player.

WALL STREET

Table of Wall Street market activity including various stock prices and indices.

Large advertisement for 'Red si on the to flot' featuring a man in a suit and a woman, with text about pensions and investments.

PENSION PLAN 28

Why women have had a poor deal

WEEKEND MONEY

OUTCAST 31

Rejection of the baby bounty hunter



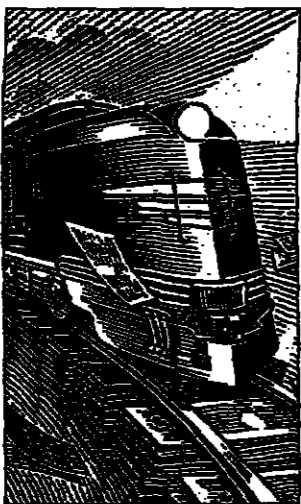
Risks and rewards of coupling your fortunes to the rise and fall of Railtrack shares



Red signals on the line to flotation

Marianne Curphey asks whether predictions of high yields should be taken at face value

More people have signed up for Railtrack shares in the fast week of registration than for any other privatisation, almost guaranteeing the offer will be oversubscribed. Many have been tempted by headline-grabbing forecasts of 25 per cent dividend returns in the first year, more than five times better than the best building society interest rates.



September. This is essentially a return of 9 per cent.

With yields of only 7.5 per cent and 8.4 per cent respectively on short-dated and long-dated government gilts and 6 per cent on utilities, Railtrack looks too good to be true at first glance. However, as with any company promising unusually high returns, investors should treat these figures with caution, and remember that if Railtrack's share price dives after trading begins, the equivalent of the money they made on the dividend could be wiped out overnight.

Railtrack also expects to pay an interim dividend in February, which its advisers have suggested could be about half of the final dividend, or 8.6p per share gross. The combined dividends would be 25.8p per share, a yield of 13.5 per cent over the nine months from May 20, when trading starts. On an annualised basis, this would be a gross return of 16.3 per cent.

The claims of a 25 per cent return count the 10p per share discount, which private investors enjoy over the institutions'

first instalment price of 200p, as an extra dividend. This would push up the return to 18.8 per cent, or 25 per cent annualised. But the figure is misleading because investors need to know the return based on their own outlay.

There is also the question of political uncertainty. The Conservatives have a majority of only one in the Commons and this week's local election losses will have reinforced sentiment that a general election may be called before February. Labour has not gone into detail about its plans for Railtrack, but says it will increase regulatory controls. This might affect Railtrack's ability to pay the February dividend.

Regardless of any political change, investors will have to pay a second instalment next June. The price of fully paid shares is expected to be between 340p and 380p for the UK public offer (for private investors) and 350p to 380p for the international offer (for institutions and individuals buying large numbers of shares). The fully paid shares are expected to yield between 6.78 and 7.57 per cent gross for individuals and 6.6 to 7.36 per cent for institutions. Exact prices, dependent on City interest, will not be known until dealing begins.

THE LONG OR SHORT HAUL?

EARLIER this year, investing in Railtrack seemed as attractive a proposition as biting into an old-style British Rail sandwich. However, the lower-than-expected share price and the various inducements have significantly improved the company's image.

Justin Urquhart Stewart, of Barclays Stockbrokers, predicts that the issue will be oversubscribed by investors excited by the yield. He believes, however, that most will sell out within a year or 18 months.

Although Railtrack is not primarily seen as a growth stock, analysts such as Phillip Epsley, utilities specialist at Alben E Sharp, the stockbroker, are excited by the prospects for diversification into retail, through the development of mini-shopping malls at the 14 main stations.

Mr Epsley considers Railtrack to be "a good buy, a classic Pep stock". He points out that if the shares perform well on their first day, rising by as much as 10 per cent, the company may be eligible to join the FT-SE 100 (Footsie) index of leading shares. This would mean that index tracker trusts that hold the same shares as the index would be obliged to buy Railtrack shares, boosting the price.

Matthew Orr, of Killik & Co, the private client stockbroker, is impressed by Railtrack's high dividend yield and secure income flow. But he is not recommending that his clients stag the issue.

ANNE ASHWORTH

Trackers for the long-term

Karen Zagor on the value of timing in the market

This week's erosion in share prices has left investors wondering whether a downward correction for the stock market is finally on its way and what that means for their money.

The FT-SE 100 index has had a strong run since the start of 1995, but so far this year it has failed to move past a record 3,857.1, set on January 19, though it remains at historically high levels. The FT-SE 100 fell 23.6 on Monday to 3,809.2, regained a 8.7 points on Tuesday, before losing 11.9 points on Wednesday. On Thursday the index fell 29.6 to 3,776.4, and a further 24.8 yesterday, to 3,751.6.

There was no particular reason for this week's losses. Instead, the market registered its general disappointment that anticipated bids had not materialised and concern that John Major's grip on the leadership was weakening. Yesterday, the drop was caused by a

wobble on Wall Street. More worrying than the isolated events of this week is the growing sentiment that the UK market is set for a fall.

Some believe any decline will be temporary, reflecting political instability as the nation gears up for an election. Others say there is little to support the market's current strength and a more permanent decline is overdue. For the many people who have invested in index-tracker funds, these sentiments are alarming. Tracker funds are designed to reflect the movement of a chosen stock market index, such as the FT-SE 100 or FT

all-share. They have performed well in the past year, thanks to rising share prices. For example, Virgin Direct's tracker Pep, launched in March 1995, rose 28.1 per cent in year one.

One of their chief attractions is that they have low charges. This is partly because the very nature of a tracker means that it is not necessary to employ an expensive fund manager to hand-pick individual shares. The danger is that when the market falls, the value of your tracker investment will fall too. And with a tracker fund, there is no opportunity for your investment to outperform

the market. This may explain why, according to Microcap, top UK growth funds have outperformed tracker funds in the five years since May 1, 1991.

Joe Rooney, global equities manager at Lehman Brothers, says now is not the time to put money into a tracker. "Within the context of Europe, we would argue that it is time to be getting out. First of all, we find that a number of markets are looking expensive, both against their own history and in a global context. Most obviously, there is the UK, but also increasingly, there are The Netherlands and Switzerland."

It rarely makes sense to put money into a tracker fund when indices are trading at peak levels. On the other hand, the long-term trend is for rising markets, so anyone planning a 20-year investment would probably see decent gains, even if the market moves lower this year.

Weekend Money is edited by Anne Ashworth

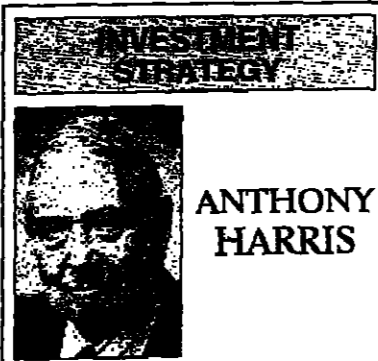
Why funds are getting bearish

Politics is not the only shadow over the markets. The whole investment scene has changed rather radically in the four months since I vacated this column. The London market, which was powering through the 3,800 mark at the turn of the year, has since then been the worst performing major market in the developed world.

This is in spite of rising consumer spending and some interest rate cuts. It is not just that good economic news can be bad for the markets: it has been the wrong sort of good news. Consumer spending financed by windfalls and questionably justified tax cuts is worrying, especially when export growth has stopped. Meanwhile, industry has stagnated for a year and profits remains under a competitive squeeze.

Small wonder that a bearish mood is now reported in London. So far, this has mainly affected the institutions rather than the private investor, and for good reason.

If you are a gross fund you pay no income tax, so a running yield of more than 8 per cent in government bonds, which double the equity yield, looks very tempting. For the private portfolio holder, no doubt paying 40 per cent tax at the margin, high income is far less attractive.



ANTHONY HARRIS

Further? In core Europe, probably not. The bond markets are already taking an on-time start for a limited EMU, with fudged rules, as a fact but is this good news? Equity markets must at some stage reflect what it is actually likely to mean. All the core European economies are slowing down sharply, although the forecasts are catching up only slowly with reality; stocks are grossly excessive, margins squeezed, and they may be flirting with actual recession. The forecast still look for a recovery next year, but they were drastically wrong for 1996.

And if a recession happens, what can be done? Fiscal reflation is virtually ruled out, even under fudged convergence criteria. Monetary stimulus depends entirely on the Bundesbank, which is already showing signs of nerves over the sinking mark. The likely answer is that they will do too little, too late.

The non-joiners, such as Italy and Sweden, preserve some freedom of

action and could sustain their recent strong stock market recoveries for some time yet — and the paradox of Milan, celebrating the first left-wing Italian Government in modern history with a price surge, should at least reassure British investors worried about Tony Blair. But could these economies long sit out a recession in core Europe? That looks too like a long shot.

What about Tokyo, that long-time favourite of British fund managers? It staged quite a powerful recovery last year and the economy is now, at last, growing. But the authorities face a dilemma: they are running what they see as inflationary risks to protect a still desperately weak banking system.

At some point, they will tighten, and the rumours have already started. Meanwhile, the Nikkei index, dependent on foreign support, is beginning to look range-bound, and yields are still minuscule. For well informed stockpickers only.

That leaves the volatile emerging markets, again a case for well-educated selection. Wall Street is up a further 10 per cent this year. Here at least is a robust economy, a real "feel-good" factor (watch President Clinton's ratings), still rising profits, and record mutual fund sales.

The problem here is simply vertigo: p/e ratios are high (though short of records), and the dividend yield is only 2 per cent. Memories of the 1987 correction simply will not go away; and if it happens, who will be immune? All in all, the case for some judicious profit-taking does look quite compelling.

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Many women face hardship in retirement, says Sara McConnell

Financial flaw in being female

An estimated ten million women, or 52 per cent of adult women, will face financial difficulty when they retire because they have not put enough into their pensions during their working lives, according to research published this week.

Even those who are working and putting some money aside cannot rely on being financially secure because they are not contributing enough. Of working women, 43 per cent will face financial hardship unless they step up their saving.

Flemings, the investment trust company that commissioned the research, argues that the findings strongly reinforce the case for introducing compulsory contributions to a top-up pension, which would run alongside the existing basic state pension.

This politically sensitive issue is being actively explored but no one wants to make a specific commitment to it for fear of alienating voters. Labour has rejected Conservative claims that it plans to introduce large compulsory contributions from employers and employees to state-authorized schemes. But it is investigating the possibility of low-cost voluntary schemes run in partnership between the public and private sectors.

Daniel Godfrey, Flemings' marketing director, said that the company would be actively lobbying MPs on setting up compulsory pension provision with a choice of authorized providers. He suggested that a compulsory contribution of 5 per cent of salary would be a reasonable level. Women find it particularly difficult to build up good pensions. On average they earn less than men. More women than men work part-time, which has excluded them from many company pension schemes.

In addition, women are more likely to have career breaks to bring up families. They cannot contribute to a pension unless they are earning. Many women have relied on their husband's pension but then discovered that, under existing laws, they may be left in penury if they divorce.

The Government has now conceded the principle of splitting the pension on divorce but is still delaying the introduction of changes that would allow the pension to be split at



Dee Moyes is hoping to add lump sums to her regular plan.

DEE MOYES is 49 and has worked full-time all her adult life, except for a two-year break to start a family. But like many women, her pension will be far below her final annual salary. When she retires, she should qualify for a large part of the basic state pension because she has always made full National Insurance contributions. But the full basic state pension for a single person in 1995-96 is just £61.15 a week, with the pension for a couple being £97.75. This is less than one sixth of the national average wage.

Mrs Moyes was encouraged to contract out of Serps and set up a personal pension. But she was 41 when she contracted out in 1988 and some advisers recommend that women over 40 receive better benefits from the state scheme, which is void of large charges.

Mrs Moyes has now rejoined Serps. But the maximum anyone can get from Serps is £101.44 a week or £5,274 a year. Mrs Moyes realised the state schemes would not be enough. Two years ago she started a personal pension. She is now putting in £100 a month and is hoping to add lump sums to try to build up her fund.

the time of divorce, rather than on the husband's retirement. Mintel, the market research group, has used statistics on spending and salaries and Inland Revenue figures on the amounts people have invested in pensions to build a picture of how much women put into pensions. This is the first stage in a three-part survey, *The Fleming Pension Map of Britain*, that will also reveal which regions will have the most comfortably-off pensioners and how the self-employed will fare in retirement. The survey divides women into five categories:

■ **Ideal retirement:** these women will retire on two thirds or more of their final salary. Long-standing members of company schemes paying pensions based on salary can expect this level of payout. Only 21 per cent of working women and 11 per cent of all women, who have worked at some time, will achieve this.

■ **Comfortable retirement:** these will receive between half and two thirds of their final salary. But again only 12 per cent of all women and 19 per cent of all working women have put aside enough for this.



Lucy Jago stresses the importance of flexible pensions to those working on contract

PENSION planning was not a priority for 29-year-old Lucy Jago. Her time-consuming job as a producer/director at the BBC left little space for thinking about the future. "It took me a long time to get round to it. I kept umming and ahing, knowing I had to do something." In the end, she took the plunge and set up a pension with Allied Dunbar, because she knew someone who worked for that company.

But Ms Jago had second thoughts about the move. "As a researcher, I was used to asking questions but I felt very vulnerable because of my depths of ignorance [about finance]."

She cancelled the pension after one payment and got her money back in full without any trouble but this still left her with the problem of how to plan her pension.

It took visits to four or five financial advisers before she decided to take out a pension with Standard Life through independent advisers

Fiona Price and Partners. At the moment she is putting in £150 a month and "seeing how it goes". "I've made up my mind to take control of my finances. I'll put any extra into a savings plan and pay off my mortgage."

Like growing numbers of people in the media Ms Jago has always been self-employed, working to a succession of short-term contracts. She is unfazed by this relative lack of job security — "I'm a creature of contract" — but points out it has implications for pension planning as being able to stop and start contributions is important. "My income will be erratic so I need a flexible pension. I want to write eventually." The prospect of retirement is almost too distant to contemplate. "I never think of myself as retiring. My job is like a life."

But in common with the rest of the post-welfare state generation, she is realistic enough not to expect help from the State when the day comes.

■ **Satisfactory retirement:** a quarter of all women can expect between 40 per cent and 50 per cent of final salary. But only 17 per cent of working women fall into this category.

■ **Poverty:** more than a quarter of all working women and nearly a third of all women will face living on less than 25 per cent of their final salary.

QUESTION OF MONEY

Leasehold law reform dogged by obstacles

Leaseholders' rights were once more the subject of heated debate this week when the Housing Bill returned to the Commons. Labour had succeeded in pushing through three clauses during the committee stage to give leaseholders new rights. But this week the Conservatives fought back with new amendments. The Government was forced to promise better protection for leaseholders last January after revelations in *The Times* and elsewhere that rogue landlords were making leaseholders' lives a misery with large service charge bills and intimidating behaviour. Over the last two months, ministers have been locked in battle over how best to protect leaseholders.

which will allow leaseholders to ask a Leasehold Valuation Tribunal (LVT) to appoint a manager if the landlord is failing to manage the property — currently, leaseholders have to go to court. The proposed legislation will also incorporate a code of practice for managing agents, drawn up by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. But as MPs pointed out, no one knows how strict the code will be or how LVTs will cope with the increased workload.

Q What were the new Labour clauses?

A The most controversial would have given leaseholders the right to manage their own blocks. Freeholders are responsible for maintaining blocks they own, but leaseholders pick up the bills. In some cases, landlords and their agents have evaded legal safeguards and charged excessive sums for maintenance and repairs. Labour wants leaseholders to have the right to set up a management company, which would employ its own agent. The freeholder would have the right to belong to the management company but the majority of leaseholders would control costs.

Q Why didn't the Conservatives agree?

A John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, says that such a move would deprive freeholders of their rights without compensation and could be challenged in the European Court.

Q So what do the Tories propose instead?

A They introduced a new clause this week (voiced in by a small majority),

Q You said there were three Labour clauses.

A Yes. Labour also sought to abolish the "low rent test" for leaseholders wanting to buy the freehold. Currently, leaseholders only qualify to buy if they have a long lease (originally more than 21 years) and are paying a "low rent", defined by complex formulae depending on when the lease was granted. Many long leaseholders pay a nominal ground rent to qualify on this score, but some people, particularly in central London, have rents set too high to qualify. In some cases, landlords set rents high to stop people enfranchising.

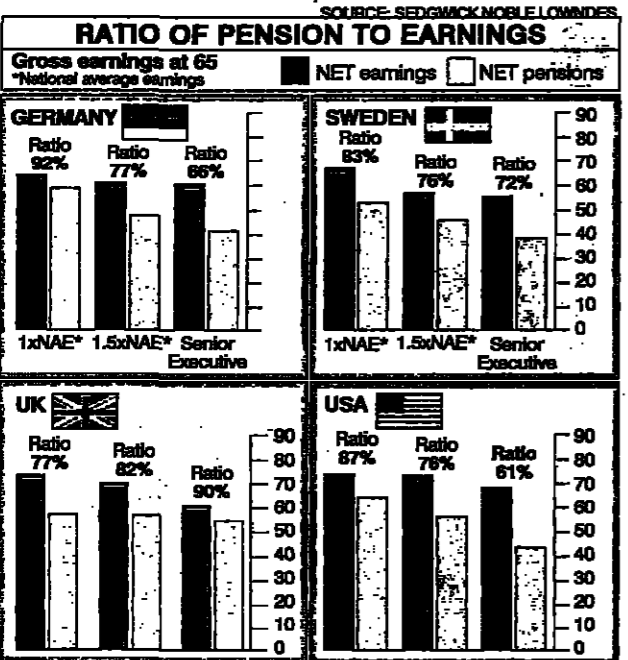
Q Did the Conservatives not like this either?

A No. They argued that it is vital to differentiate between "real" leaseholders, who are homeowners in all but name, and those who are merely tenants, although they have long leases, and who should be excluded from the right to buy the freehold. A successful Conservative amendment abolishes the low rent test for all leases of 50 years or more originally, instead of abolishing the test altogether. The Tories also reversed Labour's third new clause, which would have allowed leaseholders to buy the freehold of blocks where up to 25 per cent of the space is commercial.

Q They introduced a new clause this week (voiced in by a small majority).

SARA MCCONNELL

How bosses and workers fare elsewhere



In a week when Cedric Brown attended his last annual meeting as British Gas's "fat cat" chief executive, readers will not be surprised to learn that executives fare better in Britain than ordinary workers when it comes to pension benefits. In most countries, executives receive a smaller proportion of their net earnings in pension benefits than a worker on average national earnings, according to a study by Sedgwick Noble Lowndes. In the UK, however, a senior executive can expect to receive a net pension equivalent to 90 per cent of net earnings. In contrast, an employee on average earnings will generally receive a net pension equivalent to 77 per cent of net earnings. David West, senior consultant at Sedgwick Noble Lowndes, says the reasons are partly

cultural, partly tax-driven. "Traditionally, UK executives have been rewarded with higher pension levels because of the tax efficiency."

□ **UNITED STATES:** One would expect the spiritual home of capitalism to favour executives, but when it comes to pensions, employees get a greater part of the pot. A person on average earnings can expect a pension of 87 per cent of earnings; a senior executive gets a more modest 61 per cent. Of course, the base from which an executive's pension is calculated is far higher than an average salary, and executives are also rewarded with share options and other perks that can boost their retirement income. US pensions usually include social security and private pensions. Most employees

participate in employer-sponsored pension plans. At present, the normal retirement age is 65 for men and women, but a reduced pension can be claimed from the age of 62. However, the US will slowly lift its minimum retirement age to 67.

□ **FRANCE:** Senior executives typically get pensions equivalent to 77 per cent of earnings, while employees on average earnings receive pensions of 87 per cent. The state social security system has traditionally been generous, but rising unemployment has led to a drop in contributions, leaving the system in crisis. Men and women can take retirement between 60 and 65. All commercial and industrial enterprises make supplementary pension provisions for employees, on top of

social security. There are no self-administered schemes. Any company with more than 50 employees is required to share profits using a pre-determined formula. Private plans are rare, but may become more popular as social security is cut back.

□ **GERMANY:** Senior executives can expect to retire on 66 per cent of their net earnings, while employees on average income retire on 92 per cent. The normal retirement age is 65, but employees who satisfy certain requirements can retire on a full pension at 63. It is also possible to receive a partial pension from 62, while continuing in part-time work.

□ **SWEDEN:** The national system provides adequate pensions for most employees. Senior executives usually

retire on 72 per cent of their earnings, while those on average earnings retire on 83 per cent. State benefits are supplemented by universal collectively agreed employee-benefit plans. The normal retirement age is 65 for men and women. Those who retire early can take a reduced pension from 60, while those who remain in work can receive an enhanced pension to age 70.

□ **JAPAN:** Employees usually receive a lump sum, in addition to social security, when they retire. Senior executives generally retire on 47 per cent of earnings, while employees on average income retire on 65 per cent. Pensions are payable from age 60.

KAREN ZAGOR

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How to develop mutual mistrust

Critical, unruly shareholders are part of a company chief executive's well-paid lot. If a group opposed to a certain policy disrupts the annual general meeting, the rebels can be ejected from the venue, but not from the shareholders' register.

Building society bosses have no need to be so tolerant or democratic. As has emerged this week, societies enjoy far more draconian powers than corporate bodies to expel investors whose motives may be suspect. Provided that the rules of the society permit it, savers can be judged to be unwelcome speculators, and have their accounts closed, with no reason given and no redress.

As our report on page 31 shows, this has been the fate suffered by some of those who have recently opened accounts with two societies, Loughborough and National Counties.

Both these determinedly independent societies believe



COMMENT
ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance Editor

that recent members are interested only in takeover windfalls. However, the ban on new accounts extends to babies, not the most obvious class of carpetbaggers, and to others who were only looking for a good home for their savings.

Certainly, some of those who have invested may have hoped for a payout. But no society can demand that all its investors are highly principled, passionate advocates of mutualism. It is also significant that, at both the Loughborough and the National Counties, suspicion does not extend to newcomers with larger balances. It seems

that having thousands to invest means that your intentions must be honourable.

The dismissive letter sent to the National Counties rejects, announcing the closure of their accounts, contains not a word of apology or explanation. Those for whom the myriad bid rumours and impending conversions in the building society sector have not been the subject of intimate study felt as though they had committed some terrible offence.

They had been found guilty, without a chance to plead their case. Rarely can a service industry business have communicated with its

customers in a manner more likely to misfire.

Closing accounts is an unnecessarily tough measure to deter opportunists. Other societies who realise the paramount value of maintaining public goodwill have been content to raise their minimum investment level, or to exclude savers from outside their region.

The effect of closing accounts will not be to still the gossip surrounding the National Counties, but to make savers even more disenchanted with institutions that once prided themselves on their universal welcome.

In the slow lane

SUN ALLIANCE and Royal Insurance say they are merging to win more and better-value business. However, the experience of one reader reveals that Sun Alliance, at least, has much to learn.

The reader found that his ten-year-term policy was about to mature. To renew it,

he would have to pay more than £1,000 a year, four times the previous amount. When he contacted Sun Alliance, he was told that the premium was high, partly because the policy was "no longer being marketed". They did supply some lower quotes, but he is now shopping around for other deals. Term insurance is a highly competitive market. But, perhaps, Sun Alliance has not heard this.

The company's inflexibility may mean that it loses a policyholder. It is a characteristic it shares with the other traditional members of its industry. Nowhere is it better seen than in its snail's pace handling of the personal pension scandal.

This week, the industry has finally outlined how it will work to speed up the compensation process. There is also, at last, a guide for the scandal's victims. But from small's pace to tortoise-like is still too slow.

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PORTFOLIO

Inflation dogs life of Brian

Karen Zagor
meets the pet owners who have seen their pug's policy rise 89%



Peeved pug and policyholders Robert and Julie Breckman

Robert Breckman was less than thrilled when he discovered that the Pet Plan insurance on his pedigree pug had jumped 89 per cent in three years.

The pug, Anjakarn Tyroan, otherwise known as Brian, had not been ill since the policy was taken out. "He's quite an expensive dog, so we have the policy in case he has surgery or we lose him. But so far we have never claimed. He's a lovely dog with a vicious lick," said Mr Breckman, of Chelsea, west London.

Pet Plan, which this week announced that it had been sold for £32.5 million to Cornhill Insurance, said: "We have spent a considerable amount of time and resources in reviewing our premiums to ensure that they as far as possible reflect the claims exposure and true loss ratio in any given area. Our analysis confirms that both the incidence and claims amounts in London are considerably greater than those in the Home Counties and very considerably greater than those in the rest of the UK." The company notes that London vets charge more and that Londoners take their pets to the vet more often than in other parts of the country. "The Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons annual survey concurs with this analysis in addition to our own research," a spokesman said. "In effect,

London premiums have been substantially subsidised for a number of years by policyholders elsewhere in the country."

For London pet owners, there is some good news. The company says it believes that its London premiums and claims experience are now properly aligned and that premium increases can stabilise.

Increased competition in the area may ultimately drive

premiums down. This week Pet Direct, which is underwritten by Lloyd's of London, entered the arena. Churchill also plans to bring out a pet policy later in the year and Direct Line is also looking at the market.

For a free insurance factsheet, write to: Association of British Insurers, 51 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7HQ.

Weekend, page 6

WHY THE PREMIUMS ROSE SO FAST

PET PLAN maintains its premiums have risen more sharply in London than in the rest of the country, reflecting its experience of higher claims in the London area. But a quick look at the figures shows that premiums have actually risen quite steeply throughout the UK. Three years ago, Robert Breckman paid £94 to cover his dog for a year. At the time, there was no substantial difference in rates between London and the rest of the country. Today, Mr Breckman pays £178, an increase of 89 per cent. If he lived in the Home Counties, he would pay £155.89, a rise of nearly 66 per cent and if he lived in the rest of the UK he would pay £139.09, a rise of nearly 48 per cent. Pet Plan says veterinary fee inflation is running at 20 per cent a year, and that it has had to adjust its fees accordingly.

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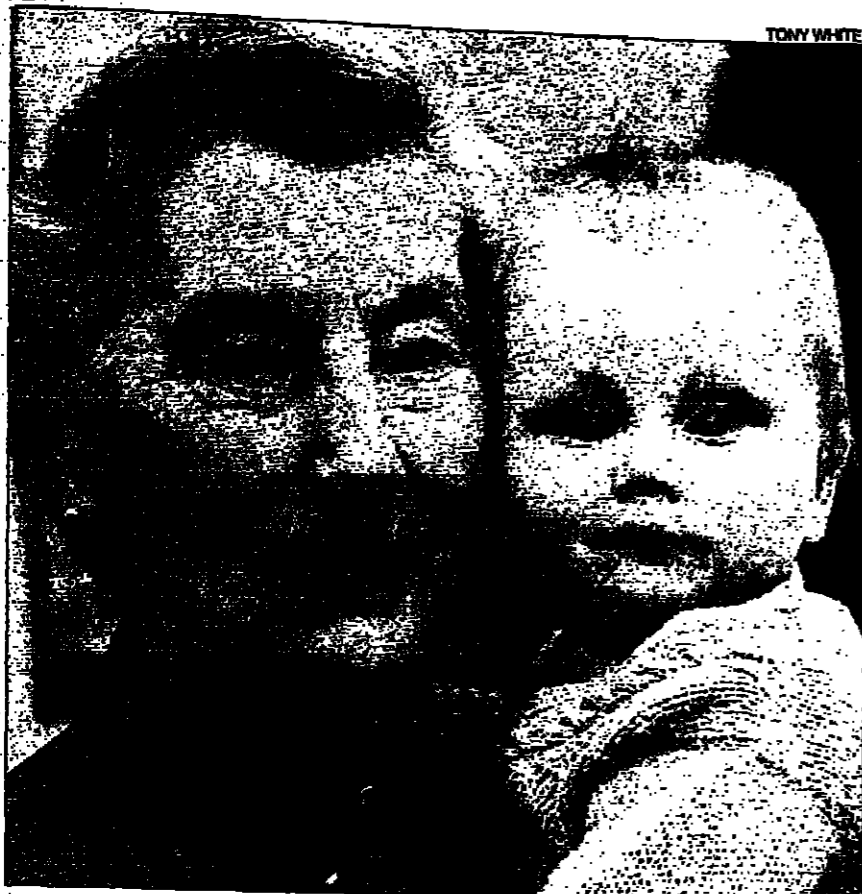
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PRUDENTIAL



Doreen Meredith and grandson Stefan, who was rejected as a fortune hunter



Charlotte Bird and son Barney

Savers attack 'offensive' National Counties stand

Determined to thwart speculators, National Counties Building Society is summarily closing all accounts that have been opened with small amounts since the beginning of the year. Children are among those being forcibly ejected from the society's books, in a move sanctioned by the society's own rules. Brian Murphy, the building societies ombudsman, is now investigating the situation, which has already brought complaints to his office.

The ombudsman is to look at a society ban on 'speculative' accounts, says Anne Ashworth



not extend to newcomers who have opened accounts with larger sums.

The decision and the tone of the letter sent by National Counties to investors whose accounts are being closed have angered many readers of *The Times*, who feel that they have been accused of some crime. Steve Aury, a reader from Mirfield, West Yorkshire, called the letter a "particularly offensive communication".

In the letter, investors are instructed to return their pass-books and told not to approach the society for further explanation. Indeed "contact with the society regarding the issue of this notice will serve no purpose whatsoever".

Doreen Meredith, who lives in Kent, has been a National Counties customer for 40 years. Her mother was a member of Post Office Permanent Building

Society, which merged with National Counties in 1973. But this long association did not stop the society from closing an account opened for Mrs Meredith's six-month-old grandchild, Stefan Meyer.

The National Counties was chosen not because Mrs Meredith believed it was about to be taken over, but because its rates of interest have always been above average. The baby's elder brother also has a National Counties account but the society did not link the two children, in spite of the unusual surname. Even if the relationships had been known, this would not have been enough to prevent the society from turning away the child.

Mr Milton told *The Times* that having a grandmother who is a long-standing customer does not convey an entitlement to an account with the society.

Mrs Meredith's daughter may now close her other son's account.

Charlotte Bird, a reader from Oxfordshire, is also an aggrieved and offended customer. She transferred £50 to National Counties from an account with another larger society, meaning to add more money later. Her prime object was not to benefit from a takeover, or similar move, but to improve the rate she was earning on her money. She concedes that, like any one else, she would have welcomed a takeover payout. But she points out that only those with £100 invested can vote and share in any windfall.

John Stones from Lincoln is to complain to the ombudsman about the National Counties move. Mr Stones, a chartered surveyor, believes that it is unrealistic for the society to demand that all savers have pure motives.

"I opened the account to establish a shareholding but I was also looking to transfer my Tessa to the society once it had matured because the National Counties was offering such a good rate," he said.

National Counties also announced this week that it was continuing to bar its doors to all new accounts, whatever the size of the opening balance.

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Pension Charges Compared

Effect of charges, based on contributions of £200 per month over 10 years, assuming all investments were to grow at 9%

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Legal & General	£3,100	£33,100
Standard Life	£3,100	£32,600

Source: Companies' own illustrations, April 1996

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Helmut Kohl knows that the future of his Government depends on the success of his spending cuts and reforms

Kohl industry cheers UK

Impressive though they are, it is unlikely that Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, had his mind entirely focused on the guard of honour formed by the Scots Guards when he visited Downing Street this week.

Chancellor Kohl is far more consumed with implementing his package of spending cuts, welfare reforms and tax changes unveiled last week. At stake is the survival of his Government. Unemployment is above four million, and rising, and forecasts for the GDP growth of the German economy this year have been slashed from 2.5 per cent to 0.5 per cent.

The federal Government is looking to cut spending next year by £11 billion, while the German states and local authorities attempt to impose similar economies. Whether Chancellor Kohl is entirely successful, the German budget measures do have implications for Britain and UK investors.

Stephanie Pfeifer of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell's European economics desk, believes

Germany's budget should benefit investors, says Robert Miller

that the German budget measures "will boost confidence" in general although the market has already factored into equity and bond prices the view that not all the cuts will be implemented. She argues that the boost for companies is in a relaxation of the regulations on what companies must pay to staff on sick leave and exempting smaller companies from tough employment protection rules.

David Paterson, managing director of Fleming's unit trust arm, says that, although the German stock market has a market capitalisation of around £280 billion compared with France's £260 billion and the UK's £700 billion, it still has the ability to provide extra impetus to the performance of a well-diversified European unit or investment trust portfolio, which could qualify under the annual £6,000 allowance for a general personal equity

plan. According to Micropal figures this week, the trusts which have managed to sidestep some of the pitfalls set for unwary managers include Fleming's European Fledgling investment trust, up nearly 100 per cent over three years. Morgan Grenfell's Europa and European Growth unit trusts have provided investors with returns over three years of £248.58 and £243.48 respectively on every £100 invested, and that is after charges are taken into account.

But underlying all of Chancellor Kohl's proposed reforms is one dominant theme, according to Mr Paterson: economic and monetary union (EMU). The Fleming manager, and indeed many of his City counterparts, argue that Germany is fully committed to meeting the strict economic criteria laid down for the first stages of EMU due to be implemented in 1999. In order

to do so, however, he needs to produce the necessary GDP figures, which could require an interim lowering of interest rates.

In terms of picking the right German companies to invest in, Mr Paterson says that it is very much down to individual stock selection rather than sector or theme. In the past German companies have been renowned for their secrecy and the fact that the dominant shareholdings were in the hands of a relatively few people, often families, which all had cross-holdings through trusts in each other. That approach is now changing and UK fund managers could be the beneficiaries.

The gradual economic integration into the mainstream European Union of the former Soviet bloc countries has naturally had the greatest impact on Germany and there is still some considerable fiscal pain to be inflicted. Nevertheless a slightly more aggressive approach to investment in the mainland European markets is unlikely to go amiss on a three-year view.

JUST as you thought that clever financial engineering had all but disappeared, Scottish Amicable has come up with a gem, and not necessarily one to be proud of. On Wednesday, ScotAm's Personal Equity Plan (PEP) Portfolio went on sale. It is based on a new Amicable Strategy split capital investment trust with a seven-year life, a minimum investment of £10,000 and a maximum of £50,000.

The Scottish life office has overcome the annual £6,000 general PEP allowance, which will be invested in the

ScotAm tests patience of the Revenue

trust's ordinary shares, by holding the remaining £44,000 in warrants, which can then be converted to capital shares in the investment trust. Dividend rights attach only to the ordinary shares: all income arises within the PEP.

The aim of the trust is to outperform the FT-SE 350



index on a total return basis. The up-front charge is 4.9 per cent with an annual fee of 1 per cent plus a £30 PEP charge.

John Cowan, ScotAm's general manager, says: "We regard this as a significant milestone in the development of investment products. The great attraction of

Peps has been their tax status but their biggest drawback is the £6,000 investment limit. Under current legislation, the PEP portfolio gives the client similar tax breaks to a general PEP but raises the investment that can be held by a factor of more than seven."

City investment trust analysts believe that ScotAm is testing the spirit of the PEP rules to the limit. More likely is that it is pushing the patience of the Inland Revenue even further.

ROBERT MILLER

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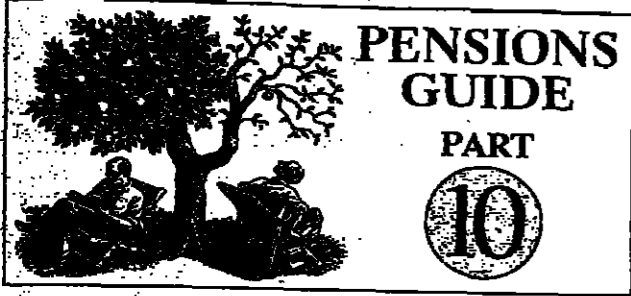
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When lump sum annuity does not become you



As thousands discover when they retire, buying an annuity from which your pension will be paid can be a poor deal: if you make your purchase when interest rates are low, then the income from your annuity will be low, a situation that cannot be remedied. Worse, still, if you die shortly after the purchase, then all the cash you have invested in your annuity passes not into your estate, but into the clutches of the insurance company.

However, using every penny of your cherished pension cash to buy an annuity is no longer the only option for those with personal pension plans and members of money purchase company pension schemes. These are phased annuity purchase, which involves buying your pension in stages (see below) and pension fund withdrawal.

Pension Fund Withdrawal: Pension fund withdrawal, introduced in 1995, allows you to take a tax-free lump sum from your pension and then to withdraw money from your fund before buying an annuity. That decision can now be delayed until age 75.

Simon Philip, director of personal financial planning at Binder Hamlyn, suggests £250,000. "We estimate that the minimum return needed for income withdrawal to break even with an annuity is 10-11 per cent. To produce an annual return at this level, it is likely the fund will need to be invested almost wholly in equities."

The two biggest players in this market are Winterthur Life and National Mutual. "The biggest single advantage of the pension fund withdrawal approach is greater flexibility," says John Moret, head of sales and marketing at Winterthur Life. "You have more control over your income. You are not locked into an annuity at interest rates which apply at the time of your retirement and if you die soon after stopping work your money doesn't simply disappear into the insurance company's coffers."

But Stephen Phillips of National Mutual Life says: "People with both occupational and personal pensions who do not need to draw all the income from their personal pension scheme initially could find these schemes particularly useful." Some may be prepared to tolerate the extra risks because of the position on death. With a conventional annuity, unless there is a minimum payment period or a spouse's or dependent's pension has been paid for in advance, the pension fund is lost on death. Under a pension withdrawal scheme, it can be passed to a spouse or dependent who can buy an annuity or continue withdrawals until an annuity must be bought. More significantly, where there is no spouse or dependent child under 18, the total fund, less 35 per cent tax, will be paid to the policyholder's estate.

How it works: The size of withdrawals you can make from your fund are restricted to



Investors are best advised to look before they leap into an annuity abyss

until the whole fund has been converted to annuities. The advantage of this approach is that on death, funds in the uncashed policies are available as a lump sum free of inheritance tax. The drawback is that it does not allow one to take the maximum tax-free lump sum from the whole plan at the start of retirement.

HELEN PRIDHAM

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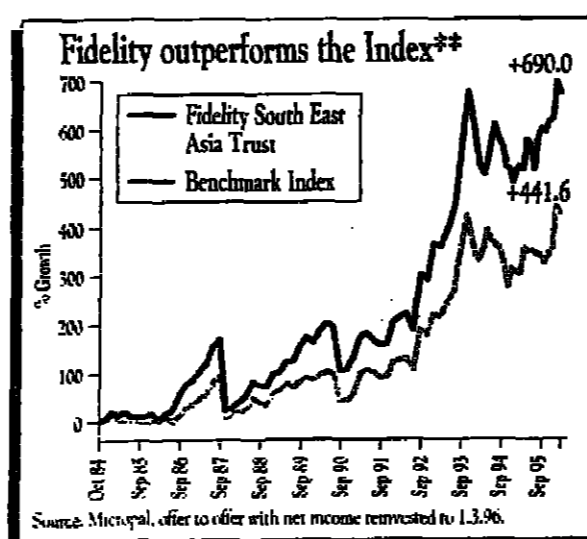
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by KC Lee, Fidelity's senior Investment Director for Asia. He currently manages Fidelity's South East Asia Trust - a £270m unit trust - which, as the chart shows, has grown by 690% since launch in 1984. He intends to use a similar investment approach to manage Fidelity Asian Values PLC.

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THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

Age should be no concern for savers

AGE CONCERN has published its fourth annual 1996-97, which outlines the savings and investment options available for older people...

ment that the first 12 VCTs have raised more than £150 million. The first part explains the tax relief available for investors...

Sharelink, the execution-only share dealing service, has published the first issue of Crest News, which provides information on Crest and its implications...

Some 90 per cent of UK holidaymakers are concerned about organising and keeping their holiday money safe...

The Inland Revenue has published a brief three-part guide to venture capital trusts (VCTs) after the announce-

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SAVERS' BEST BUYS

Table with columns: Account, Notice of term, Deposit, Rate, Interest paid. Includes Skipton BS 01756 700511, Alliance & Leicester 0845 645660, etc.

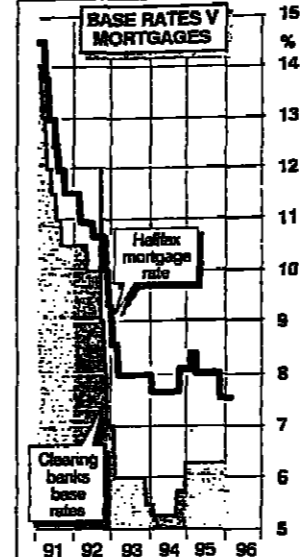
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Table with columns: Card type, Interest per month, APR%, Fee per annum. Includes Robert Fleming/SAP 0800 829024, First National 0800 558844, etc.

Table with columns: Direct Line 0141 248 9966, Yorkshire Bank 0345 181920, Midland 0800 180180. Includes APR, Monthly payment on £3,000 for 3yrs with insurance.

Rs. A = All withdrawals subject to 30 day notice of interest. C = no interest free period. E = Available to comprehensive motor insurance policy holders over 22 years. F = Fixed Rate (all other rates variable). P = By Post only.



NATIONAL SAVINGS table with columns: Gross rate, At tax rate 20%, At tax rate 40%, Minimum investment, Notice, Contact. Includes Ordinary A/C, Investment A/C, etc.

PENSION ANNUITIES

Table showing pension annuity rates for SINGLE LIFE (level ann), SINGLE LIFE (Female), and JOINT LIFE 2/3 WIDOWS (level annuity) for various ages and companies.

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

Table with columns: Investment (£), Company, Standard Rate (%). Includes 1 Year, 2 Years, 3 Years, 4 Years, 5 Years categories.

PIBS

Table with columns: Gross coupon, Buying price, Gross yield, Issue price, Minimum purchase amount. Includes Birmingham Midlands, Bradford & Bingley, etc.

FLOATING RATE

Table with columns: Gross coupon, Buying price, Issue price, Minimum purchase. Includes Cheshire (28/09-21/03) 8.58750%, First Nat (20/03-20/09) 8.70250%.

SHARE IN FOCUS: MANCHESTER UNITED LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP HOPES. Includes a small table and a photo of a player.

LARGER LENDERS

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate %, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Includes Building Societies, Bristol & West, etc.

LARGER LOANS

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate %, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Includes Building Societies, Hincley & Rugby, etc.

FIRST-TIME BUYERS

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate %, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Includes Building Societies, Bristol & West, etc.

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INVESTMENT

Large table listing various investment products, companies, and rates. Includes sections for ABNEY LIFE ASSURANCE, ALLIED DUNBAR ASSURANCE, AXA EQUITY & LAW LIFE, etc.

RAMBRO ASSURED

Table listing investment products under RAMBRO ASSURED, including various equity and bond funds.

HILL SAMUEL LIFE

Table listing investment products under HILL SAMUEL LIFE, including various equity and bond funds.

GEN LIFE & PENSIONS

Table listing investment products under GEN LIFE & PENSIONS, including various equity and bond funds.

GUARDIAN ROYAL EXCHANGE

Table listing investment products under GUARDIAN ROYAL EXCHANGE, including various equity and bond funds.

LEGAL & GENERAL UNIT ASSURANCE

Table listing investment products under LEGAL & GENERAL UNIT ASSURANCE, including various equity and bond funds.

SCOTTISH LIFE INVESTMENTS

Table listing investment products under SCOTTISH LIFE INVESTMENTS, including various equity and bond funds.

PRUDENTIAL

Table listing investment products under PRUDENTIAL, including various equity and bond funds.

ROYAL HERITAGE LIFE ASSURANCE

Table listing investment products under ROYAL HERITAGE LIFE ASSURANCE, including various equity and bond funds.

MCM ASSURANCE

Table listing investment products under MCM ASSURANCE, including various equity and bond funds.

SCOTTISH AMicable

Table listing investment products under SCOTTISH AMicable, including various equity and bond funds.

EUROPEAN

Table listing investment products under EUROPEAN, including various equity and bond funds.

SUN LIFE OF CANADA

Table listing investment products under SUN LIFE OF CANADA, including various equity and bond funds.

SCOTTISH WIDOWS

Table listing investment products under SCOTTISH WIDOWS, including various equity and bond funds.

TSB LIFE LTD

Table listing investment products under TSB LIFE LTD, including various equity and bond funds.

SKANDIA LIFE

Table listing investment products under SKANDIA LIFE, including various equity and bond funds.

Vertical banner on the right side of the page with various advertisements and logos, including 'THE TIMES MONEY SERVICE' and 'CHASE DE VERE'.

كندا من الأصل

Equities halve earlier losses

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Table of stock prices for various sectors including ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, BANKS, BREWERIES, PUBS & REST, DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS, ENGINEERING, VEHICLES, FOOD MANUFACTURERS, ELECTRICITY, BUILDING & CONSTRUCT, BUILDING MATERIALS, CHEMICALS, and DISTRIBUTORS.

Main table of stock prices categorized by sector: PHARMACEUTICALS, SUPPORT SERVICES, PRINTING & PAPER, MINING, LEISURE & HOTELS, OIL & GAS, MEDIA, OTHER FINANCIAL, BRITISH FUNDS, SHORTS (under 5 years), LONGS (over 5 years), UNDATED, INDEX-LINKED on projected inflation of, and MEDIUMS (5 to 15 years).

Table of stock prices for various sectors including RETAILERS, FOOD, RETAILERS, GENERAL, and WATER.

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Main table containing unit trust prices, organized by fund name and price. Includes columns for fund name, price, and other details.

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Gooch picks favourite rivals for punishment

By ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

WORCESTER (second day of four): Essex, with five first-innings wickets in hand, are 84 runs ahead of Worcestershire

GRAHAM GOOCH enjoys batting against Worcestershire. Actually, being an abiding obsessive about the game, he enjoys batting against anyone, but it is Worcestershire's bowling which comes easiest to him these days — so easy that his masterful 85 at New Road yesterday was his lowest score against them in three seasons.

Two years ago, on this ground, Gooch scored 101 in the first innings and then, as Essex memorably chased upwards of 400 on the last day 205 in the second. He made 86 and 165 as Essex won again last summer and his batting yesterday was not only on a different plane to anything else seen in the game but indicated a similar result.

Worcestershire have looked a poor side in this match and they are heavily indebted to Stuart Lampitt for having any foothold at all. Lampitt batted doubtfully for 46 before taking the first three Essex wickets to fall with bowling that put the waywardness of his colleagues into stark perspective. He may never quite be good enough for Test cricket but, in his new role as a selector, Gooch had precious little else to admire.

It was precisely 50 years ago today that first-class cricket resumed after the war. Worcestershire meeting the Indians here just as they will do next week. Gooch was not born then — not quite, anyway — but for a man pushing 43 he is still batting quite well enough to justifiably pick himself for England if the whim for a comeback appealed.

Worcestershire had scored 215 runs an over, so it was difficult to believe one was watching the same game when Gooch and Darren Robinson launched the Essex reply at a rate of almost seven. When they were parted, in the 25th over, the deficit was 43. Worcestershire had the worst of the conditions, cer-

tainly during the murk of the opening day, but batting was far from impossible yesterday. Leatherdale and Lampitt showed as much in a stand of 51, but both were out to sacrificial shots.

Neil Williams, the bowler to benefit on both occasions, terminated the innings with three for one in nine balls and finished with five for 57, his best figures for Essex. His only other five-wicket analysis came in the first championship innings of last season.

The first 20 overs of the Essex reply yielded 100 runs in boundaries alone. Newport gave Gooch a start with 12 from an appalling first over and Sheryar could not locate a line in two spells containing four leg-side sixes. Thomas was lively but erratic and only Lampitt regularly received the magnanimous approving nod from Gooch.

In an hour after tea, Essex lost three wickets for 45. Robinson was bowled playing no shot, Hussain caught behind against a ball that seared and lifted and Gooch, having hit 14 fours and two sixes, leg-before falling across his stumps. His departure left the stage to Stuart Law, who made batting look almost as simple and just as stylish.

Robinson was bowled playing no shot, Hussain caught behind against a ball that seared and lifted and Gooch, having hit 14 fours and two sixes, leg-before falling across his stumps. His departure left the stage to Stuart Law, who made batting look almost as simple and just as stylish.

Worcestershire: First Innings
T S Curtis c Gooch b Williams 2
G A Hick lbw b Gooch 13
G A Hick lbw b Gooch 13
D M Moody lbw b Gooch 20
D M Moody lbw b Gooch 20
S R Phoebe c Richards b Williams 20
S R Phoebe c Richards b Williams 20
S R Lampitt c Gooch b Williams 46
S R Lampitt c Gooch b Williams 46
P J Newport c Gooch b Lampitt 0
P J Newport c Gooch b Lampitt 0
R K Wignall c Phillips b Williams 17
R K Wignall c Phillips b Williams 17
P A Thomas b Williams 1
P A Thomas b Williams 1
A Sherriff not out 1
A Sherriff not out 1
Extras (lb 2, nb 2, w 0) 4
Total (78.2 overs) 201
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-14, 2-36, 3-39, 4-78, 5-86, 6-147, 7-148, 8-200
BOWLING: M P Bennett 1-12, 2-25, 3-26, 4-57, 5-71, 6-71, 7-119, 8-198, 9-224, 10-246, 11-246, 12-246, 13-246, 14-246, 15-246, 16-246, 17-246, 18-246, 19-246, 20-246
ESSEX: First Innings
G A Gooch lbw b Lampitt 85
D D J Robinson b Lampitt 2
N Hussain c Phoebe b Lampitt 2
G A Hick not out 64
D M Moody lbw b Gooch 20
P J Newport c Gooch b Lampitt 0
R K Wignall c Phillips b Williams 17
P A Thomas b Williams 1
A Sherriff not out 1
Extras (lb 2, nb 2, w 0) 4
Total (78.2 overs) 201
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-14, 2-36, 3-39, 4-78, 5-86, 6-147, 7-148, 8-200
BOWLING: M P Bennett 1-12, 2-25, 3-26, 4-57, 5-71, 6-71, 7-119, 8-198, 9-224, 10-246, 11-246, 12-246, 13-246, 14-246, 15-246, 16-246, 17-246, 18-246, 19-246, 20-246



Weekes, of Middlesex, turns on the power and hits a four off Smith, of Gloucestershire, in a fine innings at Lord's

Hollooake cashes in as bowlers dawdle Pooley opens up rich seam of runs

By MICHAEL HENDERSON

TALNTON (second day of four): Somerset, with nine first-innings wickets in hand, are 230 runs behind Surrey

SOMERSET played dim cricket yesterday. They allowed Surrey, who were 55 for four early in the day, to reach 367 and, inexorably, needed five hours and 15 minutes to bowl 70 overs. It is not as if Rose and Lee charged in from the next county. One of these days, if they keep up that rate, they will still be bowling when the *Nine O'Clock News* begins.

Nor were Surrey exactly brisk when the Somerset innings began after tea. Lewis soon retreated to gully after bowling five no-balls, three of them in a single over, and overstepped three times when he switched ends. What a carry-on. If he was fined 50 for every time he ran through the crease Lewis would soon buck his ideas up. Or would he?

Hollooake was responsible for reshaping the Surrey innings. He made 128 from 141 balls, enjoying some good fortune along the way, notably when top-edging van Troost

reached his century, and striking the ball cleanly at other times, as a tally of 22 boundaries indicates. He added 99 with Thorpe for the fifth wicket and 127 with Lewis for the sixth before he dragged on, giving Lee of New South Wales, his first championship wicket.

Thorpe, returning to the fray after retiring hurt the previous night, completed a sound half-century before nudging a catch to Turner. That was Shine's fifth wicket on his Somerset debut and a sixth following when Lewis caught a wide ball and got a tickle. Brown and Stewart had been undone earlier by balls of full length as they failed to move their feet.

The most adventurous batting came from Julian, the other Australian in this match, whose fifty came from 36 balls as he leaned into Rose, who had one of his indulgent days. Van Troost, who had bowled with some fire and little luck, earned a late reward.

After Lathwell's early departure, Bowler and Hayhurst, who was missed by Brown at slip on no. saw Somerset through to stumps.

LORD'S (second day of four): Middlesex, with six second-innings wickets in hand, are 139 runs ahead of Gloucestershire

THERE is about the Middlesex batting order a solidity which should ensure that making runs will be the least of their concerns this season. Jason Pooley, who had an impressive England A tour last winter, made 73 yesterday, putting on 124 with Paul Weekes, his established opening partner. That and an unbeaten innings of 46 by Mike Gatting were the salient details of the day.

The pitch was somewhat easier to bat on come mid-afternoon, when, for the first time in the match, there was some spin. Gentle it was, too, for the day was still numbingly cold. Pooley and Weekes each struck Davis for six and continued to drive and pull the quicker bowlers as competently as they had all innings.

When Pooley went, bowled on the back foot by Cooper, so Weekes departed at the same total. It is often the case after such a stand and, besides, he

had just reached his half-century. Smith, who had him caught at first slip, soon bowled Carr and had Brown taken at short leg.

Removing both Gatting and Ramprakash, who came in down the order owing to a rib strain, was another matter. Still, Walsh will soon be back from West Indies to take the new ball with Smith, a pairing which would suggest Gloucestershire will have as good, if not better, a season than they did last year.

Gloucestershire had gained a first-innings lead of 18 through a rollicking last-wicket partnership of 48 from 29 balls between Davis and Smith. If they continue to perform like this, their side will have no great tail at all. For the ball was struck with surprising frequency in the middle of the bat.

Otherwise, Gloucestershire struggled for runs. Symonds went in the second over, Hewitt taking a wicket with his first ball, as he had on Thursday. Alleyne was beaten off the pitch by Fraser and Russell surprisingly attempted an over-ambitious pull.

Moxon masters haul of records

By JACK BAILEY

CARDIFF (second day of four): Glamorgan, with eight first-innings wickets in hand, are 404 runs behind Yorkshire

MARTYN MOXON'S 213 was the fifth double-century of his career. It was also the first scored by any batsman on either side in 100 meetings between Yorkshire and Glamorgan.

Quite apart from the fact that it was the staple diet on the menu for more than 8 1/2 hours and played its part in the breaking of several records for this fixture, it represented, with Michael Vaughan's 183, the bones and most of the flesh of a formidable Yorkshire total of 536 for eight.

Glamorgan's reply during the 46 overs left to them yesterday, after Yorkshire had finished gorging themselves, has, so far, led to relatively slim pickings on a pitch that is still good for batting, though less good than when Moxon and Vaughan laid the foundations of their 362 partnership. Glamorgan lost James and Dale for less than 100, but Morris remains with a half-century to his credit.

When he had made only one, Morris was put down at first slip by the usually reliable Bevan off Hartley. Just how costly this will be remains to be seen.

Rain has remedial effect on Howell

From JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT IN BERGAMO, ITALY

THE bad weather that has dogged the PGA European Tour this year is continuing here and the Italian Open is now a race against time. After further interruptions for rain and lightning yesterday morning, David Garland, the tournament director, decided to cut his losses.

Instead of a complicated rescheduling that had required some players to begin their second round at 6pm yesterday, Garland changed his mind and settled for seeing the entire field through 18 holes.

The second round will be held today, weather permitting, and, if all goes well, that will enable the final two rounds to be played on Sunday. These are big ifs. Bergamo is about 1,000 feet above sea level and although it is May and one would have expected the weather to have settled, it has not. This event is the eighth of the 13 held so far this year to have been dominated or disrupted by bad weather.

For David Howell, 20, the former Walker Cup player who has had two top-ten finishes in the nine events he has played in Europe this year, the delay is a blessing. He hurt tendons in his right wrist on Tuesday when he was manhandling some luggage, and every day that passes is a help to its recovery. Before he started his first round, he had his wrist bandaged and, as long as he remembered to swing slowly, the pain did not affect him much.

Rusedski conquers his nerves

By GEOFFREY WHEELER

KIM BARNETT marked his 350th first-class match for Derbyshire in the grand manner yesterday, scoring an unbeaten 200 at Derby in the county championship match against Leicestershire, the same opponents against whom he made his highest score, 239 not out, in 1988.

Barnett went into the game needing 383 runs to become the highest scorer for the county, a record held by Denis Smith with 30,516.

After some luck early on, he became so dominant that his second hundred came from only 121 balls. The third double-century of his career was made out of a total of 362 for eight declared.

Leicestershire might have had a good day for Barnett, for Alan Mullally worried all the other batsmen and deserved his figures of five for 83. David Lloyd, the new England coach, was at Trent Bridge and was probably as baffled as everyone else by the way Sussex, having reached 84 without loss by lunch, contrived to lose seven wickets for 57 in the afternoon session. Andy Afford, the left-arm spinner who had coaching from Sussex's former cricket manager, Norman Gifford, during the winter, dismissed Alan Wells and Martin

Barnett reaches milestone in style

By GEOFFREY WHEELER

Speight in the space of three balls before Neil Lenham, who had a finger broken by Chris Cairns in the corresponding fixture last season, took his side to 279 for eight with an unbeaten 90.

Kevin Curran, with a dogged 47 not out, led Northamptonshire from 178 for six to 273 for seven at Chester-le-Street against Durham, for whom Melvyn Betts took four wickets.

Nick Knight and Wasim Khan, who both made centuries, put on 228 for the first Warwickshire wicket at Fenner's, where the champions scored 363 for three against Cambridge University.

Britain loses out in race for money

By DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

A NEW track and field season begins in earnest today and, while the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) grand prix opens in Rio de Janeiro offering record prize-money, the sport in Britain is running around with the begging bowl.

When John Lister stood down in March as treasurer of the British Athletic Federation (BAF), he warned of "painful" years ahead. The suffering has begun in the men's British League, which is losing its sponsor of 20 years, and in the women's UK League, which has no commercial support.

The BAF announced an operating loss of £174,000 last year and faces uncertainty over a £480,000 High Court action from Diane Modahl and its contract with ITV which expires this year. Much may depend on how British athletes perform in the Olympic Games where Edwards, Christie, Jackson, Gunnell, Backley, Holmes and McColgan are all potential champions and salespersons.

"We have a lot of outstanding athletes who I think are going to perform well," Malcolm Arnold, the BAF's chief coach, said. Arnold refers to the "turmoil" of last year, when the federation fell into dispute with leading athletes.

YESTERDAY'S SCOREBOARDS

Britannic Assurance county championship
Second day of four
Durham v Northants
CHESTER-LE-STREET Northamptonshire have scored 273 for seven wickets
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE: First Innings
R R Montgomerie c Collingwood 22
P Foster 40
A Freeman c Smith b Bates 40
R J Bailey c Brown b Bates 40
M B Lyle lbw b Bates 40
J J Warren c Morris b Bates 34
D J Chapel c Collingwood 14
K M Curran not out 47
A L Hopley not out 31
TD Hopley not out 12
Extras (lb 3, w 1, nb 20) 25
Total (7 wickets, 105 overs) 273
J E Embury and J P Taylor to bat
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-69, 2-69, 3-76, 4-144, 5-176, 6-178, 7-267

Gloucestershire v Middlesex
LORD'S Middlesex, with six second-innings wickets in hand, are 189 runs ahead
MIDDLESEX: First Innings
P N Westcott c Davis b Smith 50
J C Pooley b Cooper 73
M W Gatting not out 48
J D Carr b Smith 14
R R Brown c Hancock b Smith 11
M R Ramprakash not out 15
Extras (lb 3, w 1, nb 4) 8
Total (4 wickets, 114 overs) 207
FALL: 1-124, 2-124, 3-148, 4-150
BOWLING: Smith 22-7-57-3; Cooper 17-7-20-1; Lewis 15-3-82-4; Alleyne 10-3-21-0; Evans 10-3-30-0; Hancock 2-1-0-0; Symonds 2-0-5-0

Nottinghamshire v Sussex
TRENT BRIDGE Sussex have scored 279 for eight wickets against Nottinghamshire
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: First Innings
C W J Athey b Parnell 43
J W Hall c Noon b Parnell 34
M P Soper b Athey b Parnell 16
M P Wells b Noon b Athey 24
N J Latham not out 80
R J Berridge b Parnell 2
I D K Salisbury lbw b Tolley 14
V C Draxson c Carrs b Tolley 4
G C Pridley c Harrison b Parnell 30
P W Jarvis not out 5
Extras (lb 14, w 1, nb 12) 27
Total (8 wickets, 108 overs) 279
E S H Gideline to bat

Derbyshire v Leicestershire
DERBY Leicestershire, with all first-innings wickets in hand, are 251 runs ahead
DERBYSHIRE: First Innings
K J Barnett b Mullally 200
A S Rolfe c Noon b Mullally 4
C J Adkins not out 31
D M Jones c Parsons b Parnell 27
T A Tones c Noon b Mullally 10
C M Waller-Smith b Mullally 0
P J DeFreese c Noon b Mullally 0
D G Cook not out 14
K M Krikorian not out 43
Extras (lb 2, w 3, nb 2) 14
Total (8 wickets, 284 overs) 362
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-15, 2-79, 3-132, 4-151, 5-252, 6-258, 7-258, 8-254
BOWLING: Miles 19-0-97-4; Mullally 24-3-5-1; Parsons 14-1-39-2; Waller-Smith 2-0-11-0; Parnell 14-63-1; Maddy 7-3-104-0

Glamorgan v Yorkshire
CARDIFF Glamorgan, with eight first-innings wickets in hand, are 404 runs behind Yorkshire
YORKSHIRE: First Innings
M D Mason c Waller b Droll 213
M P Vaughan c Dale b Butcher 118
D Blythe lbw b Waller 12
P B Vaughan c Dale b Butcher 12
A McGraw c James b Droll 9
C White c Morris b Droll 9
D Blythe c Butcher b Droll 30
D Gough not out 31
P J Hartley b Waller 10
J A Doolan not out 24
Extras (lb 2, w 2, nb 2) 6
Total (8 wickets, 48 overs) 536
A G Wharf and R D Stamp did not bat
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-322, 2-385, 3-404, 4-418, 5-478, 6-478, 7-418, 8-433, 9-433, 10-433, 11-433, 12-433, 13-433, 14-433, 15-433, 16-433, 17-433, 18-433, 19-433, 20-433
BOWLING: Waller 25-5-101-2; Thomas 26-3-80-0; Butcher 12-1-62-1; Barnett 29-12-70-0; Droll 45-11-133-3; Dale 7-0-4-0; Cotter 3-0-15-0

Surrey v Somerset
TALNTON Somerset, with nine first-innings wickets in hand, are 230 runs behind Surrey
SURREY: First Innings
D J Bicknell c Lee b Shine 4
M A Butcher b Shine 21
J A Stewart b Shine 21
G P Thorpe c Turner b Shine 52
A D Brown lbw b Shine 7
A J Hollister b Lee b Wagh 108
C C Lewis c Turner b Shine 42
B P Julien b van Troost 50
15 J Kermay lbw b van Troost 3
M P Bicknell b Lee 19
R M Pearson not out 8
Extras (lb 7, w 3, nb 10) 20
Total (80.2 overs) 367
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-15, 2-20, 3-62, 4-55, 5-154, 6-281, 7-281, 8-317, 9-348
BOWLING: Shine 24-5-55-5; van Troost 22-2-109-2; Lee 19-2-188-2; Rose 15-3-88-0

Warwickshire v Leicestershire
FENNER'S (first day of three, Warwickshire won last): Cambridge University, with nine first-innings wickets in hand, are 348 runs behind Warwickshire
WARWICKSHIRE: First Innings
N V Knight c Churton b Moffat 128
W S Ponsford not out 112
D P Potter not out 81
T J Pugh b Heston 0
D B White c Jarmet b Mather 10
Extras (lb 6, w 1, nb 6) 13
Total (8 wickets, 368 overs) 368
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-228, 2-268, 3-270
BOWLING: Heston 17-2-74-1; James 17-3-85-0; Moffat 15-1-50-1; Jones 12-1-72-0; How 11-4-10-0

Oxford University v Hampshire
THE PARKS (second day of three): Oxford University, with six first-innings wickets in hand, are 123 runs behind Hampshire
HAMPSHIRE: First Innings
J P Stapherston b Wagh 47
S J Lacey c Batty b Wagh 112
R S M Morris lbw b Mather 28
R A Sneyd c Mather b Mather 10
G A White c Jarmet b Mather 10
P R Whitaker b Mather 38
S D Dool c Khan b Mather 30
M A Ayres c Batty b Mather 30
M J Thurfield not out 30
S M Mubson not out 17
Extras (lb 5, w 4, nb 2) 11
Total (8 wickets, 327 overs) 327
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-91, 2-151, 3-163, 4-182, 5-229, 6-294, 7-251, 8-292
BOWLING: Du Plessis 11-3-44-2; Thomas 13-3-37-0; Wagh 30-7-86-2; Mather 43-14-119-3; Mather 17-5-31-3

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Canterbury v Lancashire
CANTERBURY: Kent 88-2 v Lancashire

University matches
Cambridge University v Warwickshire
FENNER'S (first day of three, Warwickshire won last): Cambridge University, with nine first-innings wickets in hand, are 348 runs behind Warwickshire

Warwickshire v Leicestershire
FENNER'S (first day of three, Warwickshire won last): Cambridge University, with nine first-innings wickets in hand, are 348 runs behind Warwickshire

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Ultras offer exciting prospects

SOME of the fastest and most exciting yacht racing of the year gets underway today when the Frontera Ultra 30 grand prix series kicks off at Portsmouth. (Edward Gorman writes). Six boats are competing at four venues and skippers include Russell Peters, the defending champion, and Lawrie Smith, the five-times series winner.

The Ultra is one of the most extreme racing monohulls afloat. At 30ft overall but 45ft when its bowsprit is extended, it has no natural stability and requires a crew of nine sitting out on racks to balance its massive sail area. The boats are capable of speeds in excess of 25mph and with short upwind/downwind courses set very close to the shore, racing is usually intense and full of incident. Unlike conventional racing, the Ultras are permitted to hit marks as they go round and disputes on the course are settled there and then by two umpires following the boats in inflatable.

Rained remedial effect on Howell

From JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT IN BERGAMO, ITALY

THE bad weather that has dogged the PGA European Tour this year is continuing here and the Italian Open is now a race against time. After further interruptions for rain and lightning yesterday morning, David Garland, the tournament director, decided to cut his losses.

Instead of a complicated rescheduling that had required some players to begin their second round at 6pm yesterday, Garland changed his mind and settled for seeing the entire field through 18 holes. The second round will be held today, weather permitting, and, if all goes well, that will enable the final two rounds to be played on Sunday. These are big ifs. Bergamo is about 1,000 feet above sea level and although it is May and one would have expected the weather to have settled, it has not. This event is the eighth of the 13 held so far this year to have been dominated or disrupted by bad weather.

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Rusedski conquers his nerves

By GEOFFREY WHEELER

IT TAKES a great deal to stop Greg Rusedski from smiling but last night Borut Uhr, of Slovenia, almost managed it (Alix Ramsay writes). Playing in the Davis Cup Euro/African zone group two tennis tie at Newcastle, Rusedski appeared to be cruising to a simple victory until Uhr relaxed and stretched an edgy Rusedski for two and a quarter hours before the adopted Briton could win 6-1, 6-4, 6-7, 6-3.

The result had appeared to be a formality with Rusedski, Britain's leading player in the absence of Tim Henman, ranked 420 places above the Slovenian No 2. And with the power of Rusedski's service, the omens were good for a quick win. Sure enough, the first set was over in 20 minutes, but a long game of three deuces in the second set suddenly showed Uhr that he had a chance. This was not what Rusedski had in mind. By the end of the third set he was in deep water and he failed to win a point in the tie-break. Even when Uhr was broken for 5-3 in the fourth set, he was causing Rusedski problems as the Briton fell to

Mark Of Esteem has classic appeal

By JULIAN MUSCATT

MARK OF ESTEEM, the horse which lanced the blister of bad blood between Henry Cecil and Sheikh Mohammed, can make headlines in his own right by winning the Pertemps 2,000 Guineas Stakes at Newmarket today.

This intriguing classic is likely to be decided by narrow margins. And Mark Of Esteem, who missed the cold spring by wintering in Dubai, has the benefit of an ideal preparation. He deserves preference over Alhaarth, the two-year-old champion whose sheen was tarnished in a narrow defeat by Beauchamp King over the course and distance 16 days ago.

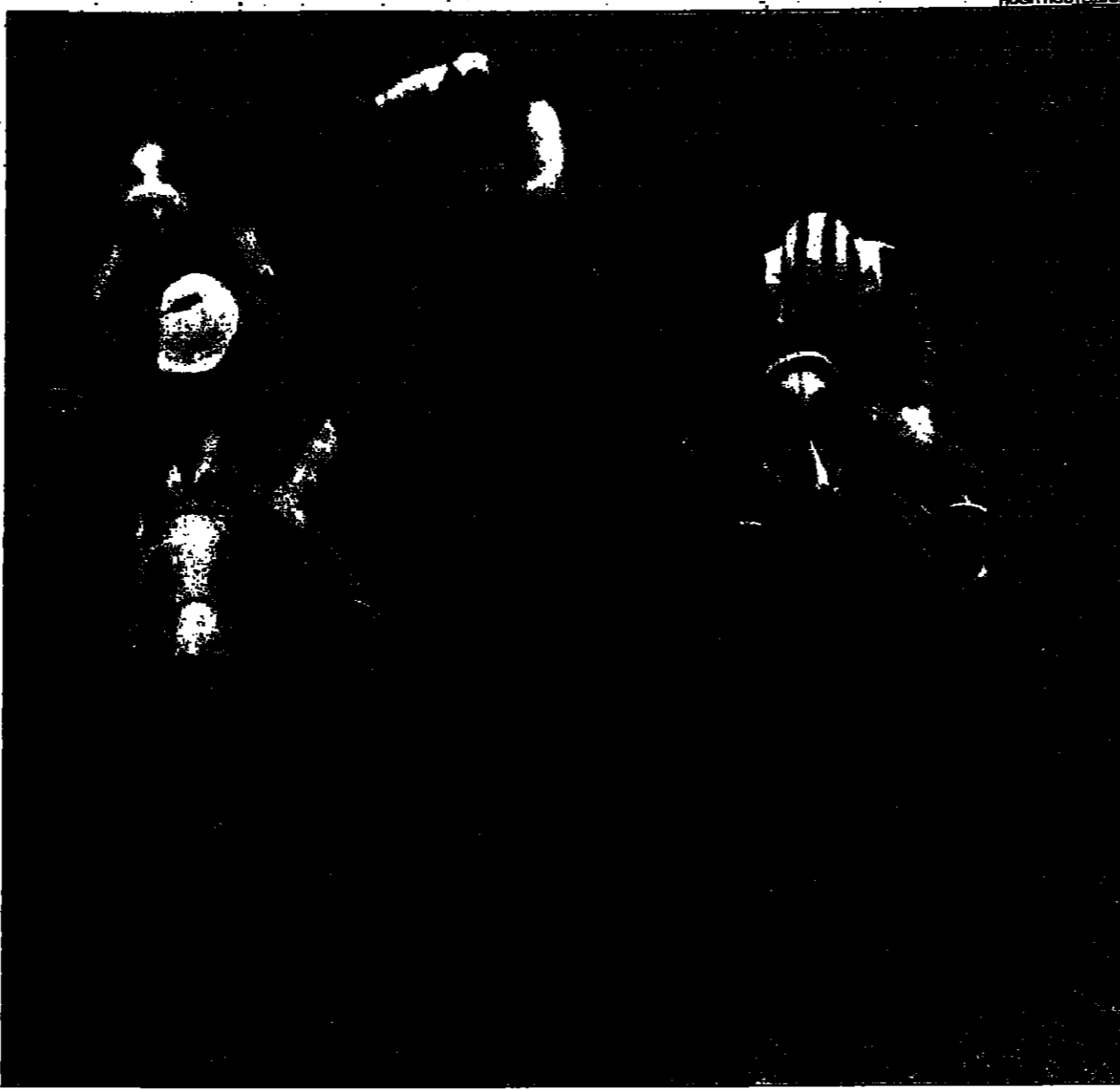
Alhaarth and Beauchamp King have since dominated a betting market fuelled by fierce debate over which colt will prevail in the rematch. So scarce is the evidence, so tenuous the logic, that no firm conclusions can be drawn. Yet the Craven Stakes revealed

staying types on his most recent outing. And he looks safely held by Beauchamp King on their Ascot encounter in October.

Those prepared to entertain Royal Applause ignore the fact that he hails from sprinting blood. This unbeaten colt has never travelled beyond six furlongs, the distance at which he should excel in summer. He will have to be outstanding to triumph over the stiff Newmarket mile. Regiment and Rumbleweed Ridge are others who may lack the requisite stamina at this level.

Bijou D'Inde, Danehill Dancer and Even Top add depth to the field without having shown enough to fight out the finish. Masehaab is more central to the plot; he has been commissioned by Sheikh Hamdan as Alhaarth's pacemaker. But Masehaab may be of limited assistance: the pair are drawn wide apart, in stalls two and 12 respectively. Indeed, Masehaab's presence could work to the advantage of those drawn around him. Mark Of Esteem is among them.

The Alhaarth camp is confident their colt will be mentally sharper than when pulling wildly for his head in the Craven Stakes. Assuming his demeanour is more relaxed, Alhaarth's punishing stride should account for the admirable Beauchamp King. He looks vulnerable, however, and Mark Of Esteem can cut him down in a tense finish. Leonine, a 66-1 chance, has ability and appeals as the best outsider.



Beauchamp King, left, defeats Alhaarth at Newmarket last month. They renew rivalry in the 2,000 Guineas today

Struggler should relish return to minimum trip

NEWMARKET CHANNEL 4



TODAY'S RACES ON TELEVISION

HAYDOCK PARK BBC1

3.05: This is a quality handicap, won for the last five years by a horse rated 90 or higher, and the two that make most appeal are Special Dawn and Verzen. Special Dawn was just pipped in the Rosebery at Kempton on ground that would have been plenty soft enough and John Dunlop's runner, usually at his best at this time of year, should appreciate today's faster surface.

Verzen is a slightly mercurial character but looks well treated judged on his victory on the July course last summer and an even better performance behind Prince Of Andros in a listed race at Wolverhampton. Being by Salse, he should not lack for stamina on his first attempt at this trip. My Learned Friend is reasonably handicapped but normally requires his first run of the season while the lightly-raced Polydamas would not be expected to improve much to enter calculations.

3.45: See left.

4.20: Although Mind Games bucked the trend 12 months ago, three-year-olds tend to be at a disadvantage against older sprinters at this time of year. That said, the unbeaten Blue Iris is an interesting runner who looks sure to pick up her fair share of races this term.

Ya Malak was second in the Nunthorpe Stakes last summer, and five of the last eight winners of this race have run well in the York sprint. Hever Golf Rose faces a tough task trying to overcome a group one penalty but Struggler makes considerable appeal. Not fully wound up when a good third here to Passion For Life, he should be even better over today's minimum trip.

4.50: Seigniorial had the benefit of the draw when dead-heating at Kempton 26 days ago and has been fortunate to be drawn near the far rail. Sir Joey arguably ran his best race over course and distance a year ago and looked to be returning to his best when runner-up at Sandown eight days ago. However, he might find it tough reversing the form with the winner, Mister Jolson, who was value for more than his two-length margin and is just as effective over six furlongs. Casterea Lad faced a tough task when a staying-on fifth to Carranita at Thirsk last time and will not be far away provided the ground is fast.

2.00: Mary Reveley's in-form Highbank, a good second at Perth eight days ago, is marginally preferred to Sovereign Parade, who looked useful when winning here on his hurdling debut in December but has not run since disappointing on softer ground at Kempton.

2.30: Treasure Agair is one of my favourite hurdlers and looks sure to make a nice novice chaser next season, but he would prefer more give in the ground. Sun Surfer won handicaps at Chesham and Cheltenham in the spring and is reasonably treated but will do well to beat Go-Infomal. Malcolm Jefferson's progressive runner disappointed at Funchestown two weeks ago, but is worth another chance to repeat the form which saw him finish an excellent second to Urubande in the Sun Alliance Hurdle at the Cheltenham Festival.



Reveley: winning chance

3.00: Despite winning his last two starts and being raised 8lb by the handicapper for his most recent success at Ascot, Flying Instructor still looks fairly treated. Paul Webber's progressive hurdler should be able to cope with this step up in class. Suivez, also a winner at Ascot on his latest start, is in great heart and looks the main danger provided the rain stays away.

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: VERZEN (3.05 Newmarket)
Next best: Abou Zouk (2.35 Newmarket)

Alhaarth to be no immovable object. Mark Of Esteem need not be an irresistible force to take his measure.

It has been largely forgotten that a scant neck separated Alhaarth and Mark Of Esteem when the pair made their debuts last July. Even then, the physical problems afflicting Mark Of Esteem were evident when Cecil later reported his charge short of work. But if those words made little immediate impact, Cecil was more forthright after Mark Of Esteem triumphed in minor company at Goodwood the following month. "Never again will my horse be beaten by Alhaarth," he declared.

Of course, Mark Of Esteem is no longer Cecil's horse. A knee injury, diagnosed on his transfer to Godolphin's desert stables in October, was cited in Sheikh Mohammed's sacking of Cecil. The Darshaan colt has since thrived in the Dubai climate. There has been no sign of limb frailty and the victory of Mick's Love yesterday demonstrated the health of Godolphin's three-year-old string.

Should he triumph, Mark Of Esteem will be the fourth individual classic winner Cecil has lost to Godolphin. Cecil will be hoping to stop the run with Storm Trooper, an impressive winner over nine furlongs here last month.

Pat Eddery lends encouragement, having deserted Danehill Dancer for Storm Trooper, but closer scrutiny of the colt's credentials leaves him with something to find. Essentially, Storm Trooper beat a field of backward,

3.45 PERTemps 2,000 GUINEAS STAKES

(Group 1; 3-0 colts and fillies; £122,262; 1m) (13 runners)

- 401 (12) 1111-2 ALHAARTH 16 (2,2,2,2,2) (M Alhaarth) W Item 9-0 W Canon 88
- (p c Unbeaten - Irish Valley) (Royal blue, white epaulettes, striped cap)
- 402 (6) 3111-1 BEAUCHAMP KING 16 (2,2,2,2,2) (P Present) J Dancer 9-0 M J Hill 88
- (p c Hesperus - Alcock) (Orange, black hood, white cap)
- 403 (4) 2215-5 BUIU O'NE 204 (2,2,2,2,2) (M Mutton) M Johnston 9-0 J Weaver 88
- (p c Caden Gommers - Prater) (Light blue and yellow check, red sleeves and cap)
- 404 (11) 1121-2 DANEBILL DANCER 14 (2,2,2,2,2) (M Tabor) N Callaghan 9-0 M J Hill 87
- (p c Danhill - Miss Ardagh) (Royal blue, orange silk, striped sleeves and cap)
- 405 (8) 6121-2 EVEN TOP 196 (2,2,2,2,2) (M Schmitt-Buchner) M Tompkins 9-0 P Robinson 82
- (p c Regenerus - Shamus) (Green and white striped, sleeves reversed, royal blue cap)
- 406 (2) 21-1 LEONINE 267 (2,2,2,2,2) (P Present) P Callan 9-0 T Gamm 78
- (p c Danhill - Inca) (Light green)
- 407 (2) 21- MARK OF ESTEEM 281 (2,2,2,2,2) (M Alhaarth) J Dunlop 9-0 L Duffell 83
- (p c Danhill - Hesperus) (Royal blue)
- 408 (3) 211- MASEHAAB 207 (2,2,2,2,2) (M Alhaarth) J Dunlop 9-0 R Hills 74
- (p c Masehaab - Fleety Night) (Royal blue, white epaulettes, black cap)
- 409 (13) 12-1 REGIMENT 28 (2,2,2,2,2) (M Alhaarth) M Tompkins 9-0 K Dancer 88
- (p c Stair - Hesperus) (Light blue, blue knee caps, dark blue cap)
- 410 (11) 1111- ROYAL APPLAUSE 219 (2,2,2,2,2) (M Alhaarth) M Hills 9-0 M Hills 88
- (p c Masehaab - Fleety Night) (Royal blue, white epaulettes, light blue cap)
- 411 (10) 621-2 STORM TROOPER 16 (2,2,2,2,2) (M Alhaarth) M Hills 9-0 P Robinson 82
- (p c Masehaab - Fleety Night) (Dark green)
- 412 (7) 4121-2 TUMBLEWEED RIDGE 17 (2,2,2,2,2) (M Alhaarth) M Hills 9-0 R Hills 85
- (p c Masehaab - Fleety Night) (Light blue, blue knee caps, dark blue cap)
- 413 (11) 8212-3 WORLD PREMIER 17 (2,2,2,2,2) (M Alhaarth) M Hills 9-0 R Hills 85
- (p c Masehaab - Fleety Night) (Light blue, blue knee caps, dark blue cap)

1996: PERTemps 2,000 Guineas Stakes (Group 1; 3-0 colts and fillies; £122,262; 1m) (13 runners)

ALHAARTH

Apr 18, Newmarket, good to firm: see Beauchamp King.

Oct 13, 1995, Newmarket, good to firm: (2-0) best Danehill Dancer (2-0) 291 (7f, m, £22,262, 4 ran).

Aug 17, 1995, York, good to firm: (2-0) best Alhaarth (2-0) neck (7f, m, £27,737, 4 ran).

Oct 21, 1995, Doncaster, good to firm: (2-0) best Even Top (2-0) 196 (1m, gp, £19,892, 5 ran).

Aug 15, 1995, York, good to firm: (2-0) best Alhaarth (2-0) 291 (7f, m, £27,737, 4 ran).

Apr 20, Newbury, good to soft: (2-0) best Alhaarth (2-0) 291 (7f, m, £27,737, 4 ran).

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ROYAL APPLAUSE

Sep 28, 1995, Newmarket, good: (2-1) best Woodborough (2-1) 4 (8f, gp, £27,262, 5 ran).

Aug 16, 1995, York, good to firm: (2-0) best Tumbleweed Ridge (2-1) head (8f, gp, £27,144, 5 ran).

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LEONINE

Aug 31, 1995, York, good to firm: (2-0) best Music House (2-0) 194 (8f, m, £25,163, 5 ran).

Aug 17, 1995, York, good to firm: (2-0) best Music House (2-0) 194 (8f, m, £25,163, 5 ran).

Aug 17, 1995, York, good to firm: (2-0) best Music House (2-0) 194 (8f, m, £25,163, 5 ran).

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Aug 17, 1995, York, good to firm: (2-0) best Music House (2-0) 194 (8f, m, £25,163, 5 ran).

MARK OF ESTEEM

Jul 28, 1995, Goodwood, firm: (2-1) best Tawell (2-1) 3 (7f, m, £7,005, 8 ran).

Jul 11, 1995, Newmarket, good to firm: see Alhaarth.

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WILLIAM HILL

1 mile, Newmarket (Today) 3.45pm, Live on CH4 TV.

6/4 Alhaarth 20/1 Regiment
10/3 Beauchamp King 33/1 Even Top
13/2 Mark Of Esteem 66/1 Leonine
7/1 Royal Applause 66/1 World Premier
8/1 Storm Trooper 50/1 Tumbleweed Ridge
12/1 Bijou D'Inde 200/1 Masehaab
12/1 Danehill Dancer

LATEST ODDS ON WILLIAM HILL TV TEXT

THUNDERER

2.00 Dushyantir 3.45 Storm Trooper
2.35 Abou Zouk 4.20 Struggler
3.05 Major Charge 5.20 THATCHERELLA (nap)
4.20 Cap Jutuca

GOING GOOD TO FIRM

TOTE JACKPOT MEETING DRAW: NO ADVANTAGE

2.00 MAYER PARRY CONDITIONS STAKES

(3-4-0; £5,548; 1m 4f) (3 runners)

RACELINE

0930 168+

NEWARK 101 201
HAYDOCK 102 202
UTTOXETER 104 204
HEREFORD 105 205
WARWICK 106 206
NEXHAM 107 207

3.05 TORCH MOTOR POLICES AT LLOYDS

RATED HANDICAP (£10,061; 1m 2f) (14 runners)

FORM FOCUS

BETTER OFFER neck 2nd of 11 to Grand Master in a handicap at Thirsk (7f, m, £22,262, 4 ran).

3.45 PERTemps 2,000 GUINEAS STAKES

(Group 1; 3-0 colts and fillies; £122,262; 1m) (13 runners)

4.20 DUBAI RACING CLUB PALACE HOUSE STAKES

(Group 1; £20,467; 1/2 mile) (12 runners)

4.50 LADBROKES HANDICAP

(£24,855; 6f) (24 runners)

FORM FOCUS

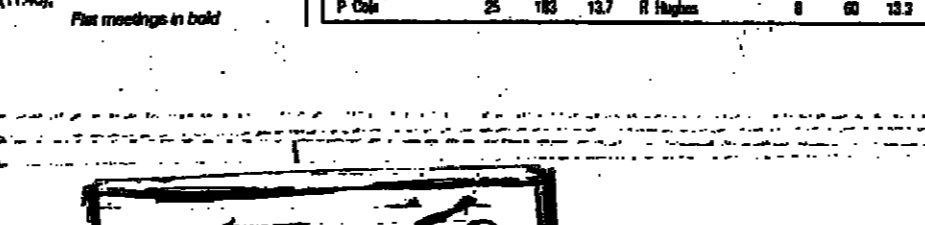
SEIGNIORIAL dead-headed for 1st with Ladbroke in a 25-runner handicap at Sandown (7f, m, £24,855, 24 ran).

5.20 CHIPPENHAM PARK CONDITIONS STAKES

(£5,348; 1m 2f) (8 runners)

Phar Too Touchy tries further

NOT many horses are still pulling at the end of a three-mile race but if they are, why not try them over four miles (Carl Evans writes). With that in mind, Devon trainer Victor Dartnall has elected to run Phar Too Touchy in today's four-mile ladies' open at the Modbury Harriers' fixture. She will be a skinny price; horses which win eight races in a season invariably are and with that total to her name, Phar Too Touchy heads the Grand Marnier Trophy given to the season's most successful horse.



HAYDOCK PARK

THUNDERER
2.40 Uncle Keeney
4.05 Rallegio
4.35 Imlek

The Times Private Handicapper's rating: 4.05 TONY'S GIFT.

IN-LINE RACECARD

11:45 GOOD TIMES 13 (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
11:55 2.40 Uncle Keeney 4.05 Rallegio 4.35 Imlek

GOING: GOOD SIS

2.00 CROWTHER HOMES BELL NOOK HANDICAP HURDLE

1 19192 CHICAGO'S BEST (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
1 19192 CHICAGO'S BEST (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88

GOING: GOOD SIS

FORM FOCUS

CHICAGO'S BEST 2nd of 5 to be crowned in juvenile hurdle at Haydock (2m) of 11 to be crowned in juvenile hurdle at Haydock (2m) of 11 to be crowned in juvenile hurdle at Haydock (2m) of 11

2.30 CROWTHER HOMES LONG DISTANCE HURDLE

1 35122 GOLDEN WILLET (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
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GOING: GOOD SIS

FORM FOCUS

GOLDEN WILLET 2nd of 5 to be crowned in juvenile hurdle at Haydock (2m) of 11 to be crowned in juvenile hurdle at Haydock (2m) of 11 to be crowned in juvenile hurdle at Haydock (2m) of 11

3.00 CROWTHER HOMES SWINTON HANDICAP HURDLE

1 10200 LINDA AFRAN (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
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GOING: GOOD SIS

FORM FOCUS

LINDA AFRAN 2nd of 5 to be crowned in juvenile hurdle at Haydock (2m) of 11 to be crowned in juvenile hurdle at Haydock (2m) of 11 to be crowned in juvenile hurdle at Haydock (2m) of 11

3.30 CROWTHER HOMES NEW FLORIDA HANDICAP HURDLE

1 11342 RUSBY BEE (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
1 11342 RUSBY BEE (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88

GOING: GOOD SIS

4.05 CROWTHER HOMES EDGE GREEN NOVICES CLAIMING HURDLE

1 40312 RALLEGIO (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
1 40312 RALLEGIO (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88

GOING: GOOD SIS

4.35 CROWTHER HOMES DOCK LANE NOVICES HURDLE

1 22212 DREAM RIDE (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
1 22212 DREAM RIDE (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88

GOING: GOOD SIS

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Table with columns: TRAINERS, Wins, Runs, JOCKEYS, Wins, Runs, Odds. Lists names like F. Taylor, M. Henderson, M. Pegg, M. R. Bentley, M. Scahill, D. Nicholson.

UTTOXETER

THUNDERER
2.40 Uncle Keeney
4.05 Rallegio
4.35 Imlek

The Times Private Handicapper's rating: 4.05 TONY'S GIFT.

IN-LINE RACECARD

11:45 GOOD TIMES 13 (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
11:55 2.40 Uncle Keeney 4.05 Rallegio 4.35 Imlek

GOING: GOOD SIS

2.40 BILL LOVE JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE

1 19192 CHICAGO'S BEST (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
1 19192 CHICAGO'S BEST (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88

GOING: GOOD SIS

FORM FOCUS

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3.00 CROWTHER HOMES SWINTON HANDICAP HURDLE

1 10200 LINDA AFRAN (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
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3.30 CROWTHER HOMES NEW FLORIDA HANDICAP HURDLE

1 11342 RUSBY BEE (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
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GOING: GOOD SIS

4.05 CROWTHER HOMES EDGE GREEN NOVICES CLAIMING HURDLE

1 40312 RALLEGIO (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
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GOING: GOOD SIS

4.35 CROWTHER HOMES DOCK LANE NOVICES HURDLE

1 22212 DREAM RIDE (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
1 22212 DREAM RIDE (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88

GOING: GOOD SIS

COURSE SPECIALISTS

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HEXHAM

THUNDERER
2.40 Uncle Keeney
4.05 Rallegio
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The Times Private Handicapper's rating: 4.05 TONY'S GIFT.

IN-LINE RACECARD

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11:55 2.40 Uncle Keeney 4.05 Rallegio 4.35 Imlek

GOING: GOOD SIS

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GOING: GOOD SIS

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1 40312 RALLEGIO (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
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GOING: GOOD SIS

4.35 CROWTHER HOMES DOCK LANE NOVICES HURDLE

1 22212 DREAM RIDE (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
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GOING: GOOD SIS

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HEREFORD

THUNDERER
2.40 Uncle Keeney
4.05 Rallegio
4.35 Imlek

The Times Private Handicapper's rating: 4.05 TONY'S GIFT.

IN-LINE RACECARD

11:45 GOOD TIMES 13 (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
11:55 2.40 Uncle Keeney 4.05 Rallegio 4.35 Imlek

GOING: GOOD SIS

2.20 TOTE PLACEPOT SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE

1 19192 CHICAGO'S BEST (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
1 19192 CHICAGO'S BEST (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88

GOING: GOOD SIS

FORM FOCUS

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GOING: GOOD SIS

4.35 CROWTHER HOMES DOCK LANE NOVICES HURDLE

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IN-LINE RACECARD

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11:55 2.40 Uncle Keeney 4.05 Rallegio 4.35 Imlek

GOING: GOOD SIS

2.20 EBF MARKET PLACE MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES

1 19192 CHICAGO'S BEST (B.F.S.) (M) D. Robinson 11:20 W. West (7) 88
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3.00 CROWTHER HOMES SWINTON HANDICAP HURDLE

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Newmarket
Going: good to firm
2.00 (1m) D. DAMEL LAURA (D. Quinn) 9-4
1.20 (1m) M. HANCOCK (D. Quinn) 9-4

Hamilton Park
Going: soft, heavy in places
1.15 (1m) T. ZABARRI (D. Quinn) 9-4
1.15 (1m) T. ZABARRI (D. Quinn) 9-4

Newton Abbot
Going: soft
1.50 (1m) T. TILT TECH FLYER (R. Clayton) 9-4
1.50 (1m) T. TILT TECH FLYER (R. Clayton) 9-4

3.30 (2m) D. DIAMOND FORT (A.P. McCoy) 9-4
3.30 (2m) D. DIAMOND FORT (A.P. McCoy) 9-4

5.00 (1m) FOREST BOY (J. F. Power) 9-4
5.00 (1m) FOREST BOY (J. F. Power) 9-4



THE NEW RENAULT MEGANE
It talks YOUR LANGUAGE

Saturday portrait: Eric Cantona, by Michael Henderson

French artist honour bound in restoring tarnished reputation

Where once there hung a cloud a halo shines. Eric Cantona, footballer of the year and a saint-in-waiting in the secular parish of sport, leads Manchester United tomorrow to Middlesbrough, where a draw will most likely bring their third championship in four years. Without him it is conceivable they would not have won one.

"Où sont les neiges d'antan?" There is no gilded past for this Frenchman, only a golden present. This time last year he was "resting", for reasons amplified earlier this week in a Croydon courtroom. As United conceded the FA Carling Premiership title to Blackburn Rovers by a point and lost a dismal FA Cup Final to Everton, the general view was that his absence had cost them a hat-trick of championships and a second successive "double".

For a while, nobody could be sure the Frenchman would stay at Old Trafford given his incendiary temperament and the severity of his triple punishment (club, FA and court) for the Selhurst Park incident. But he stayed, and played, and his brilliance has turned the season inside out. One man, we are told, cannot win or lose a championship. Says who? Take away Cantona's contribution this year and Newcastle United would already be champions. He scored the only goal in matches against Newcastle, Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur that had to be won and did more than anybody to beat Chelsea in a memorable FA Cup semi-final. His goals were dramatic, too, scored with the flourish of a man who never doubts his value.

Even by Cantona's combustible standards it has been an eventful year. Last season he was the Flying Dutchman, destined to roam the seas for ever. No port would have him. Suddenly he is Parsifal, the innocent fool, "enlightened through compassion". It took Richard Wagner 40 years to make that leap: Cantona has transformed himself within 15 months.

No foreign player has left such a deep impression on English football: not those World Cup winners.

Arduous and Klinemann, not going back a bit — Bert Trautmann. People wanted to think the worst of him and, to be honest, he presented a pretty big target. Instead, he has achieved what he could never do in France, fulfilled his talent, and, fingers crossed, reformed a character that appeared untameable. Those journalists who opposed his nomination as footballer of the year, partly because he chooses not to speak to the press, made themselves look small-minded. Whenever did a footballer say anything worth reporting?

You have to go back to Kenny Dalglish to find a player so adept at making and taking match-winning goals. Dalglish, it should be said, had an expert goalscorer alongside him at Liverpool in Ian Rush, with Soumess, Whelan,

'He stayed, and played, and his brilliance has turned the season inside out'

Hansen and Lawrenson, outstanding players, lending strong support. The present United side has a good goalkeeper in Schmeichel, an occasionally dazzling outfield player in Giggs and some keen youngsters. Deprived of their No 7 they would not be nearly so successful.

In particular, Cantona, 29, has had to carry the man Alex Ferguson bought last year to fill the net with goals. Andy Cole cuts a waif-like figure, publicly abandoned by Cantona, apparently unable to pick up the frequency of United's attacking play. If Cole cannot score regularly in the Premiership, how will he torment European defences?

Where Cantona is concerned, the manager's judgment has been vindicated and his trust returned in full measure. He gambled in buying him from Leeds United, with whom he had won a champ-

ionship medal, and gambled again when he decided to retain him. He was accused at the time of appeasing a lawless oaf and the subsequent departure of Hughes, Ince and Kanchelskis left Ferguson vulnerable to the darts of fly-by-night supporters. Last August the Manchester Evening News asked readers to judge his fitness for the job: it took a brave man to stand his ground and he has been rewarded richly by the man he defended when the sky was falling.

In a way it is a tribute to British tolerance that such a strong Frenchman has played his best football here. When President Chirac presented Gérard Depardieu with the Légion d'honneur in Paris on Thursday he referred to the actor's "heart, intelligence, strength, sensibility and fantasy". They are qualities Cantona shares with Depardieu, for they both possess that rare compound of physical strength and delicacy. Depardieu tends his own vines, Cantona paints and is learning the trumpet. Both would be handy in and around the scrum.

Now the question is can Cantona, at the height of his career, reclaim his place in the France team? He was stripped of the captaincy after the Selhurst Park nonsense and has not added to his 44 caps. All he can do is wait for Aimé Jacquet, who is expected to announce his squad two days after the FA Cup Final, to offer a wild card.

It would be stretching a point to say that they have missed him, for this is boom time for French football. Unbeaten in 21 games, with Youri Djorkaeff, of Paris Saint-Germain, in harmony with Zinedine Zidane, of Bordeaux, and with a handful of Italian-based players supplying depth, they will start the European championship this summer among the favourites. Jacquet, in any case, is not bowled over by Cantona's English achievements, reckoning that anybody can impress against such loose defences.

It is not difficult to find fault with much of English football. So much of it is unutterably foul: the complacent players, mendacious managers, those pier-end comedi-



ILLUSTRATION: STEVE MARTIN

ans who host a fantasy football lark on the box, metropolitan trendies who have turned the game into a "lifestyle accessory", unspeakable supporters and uncritical broadcasters who boost what is, after all, only a game.

At its best, though, it is a game that can touch people with a strange purity. Standing on the terraces at Maine Road 60 years ago, Neville Cardus heard a man bellow "finesse!" when Peter Doherty essayed a pass. The man,

Cardus noted, would never have used that word in the normal run of things. It was not part of his vocabulary. For that moment he had been touched, liberated almost, by a footballer's skill.

Anybody who has caught Cantona this season might have felt the same way. The qualities of sportsmen are frequently exaggerated but Cantona has accomplished something worth celebrating. All right, he loves himself and is a frightful pseud. Anybody

who numbers Jim Morrison and Mickey Rourke among his heroes is clearly a few centimes short of a franc, and he lays on the thoughtful artist a bit much.

But he can certainly play and has restored the game to those who despaired of seeing an old-fashioned footballer again, someone who knows that less means more. He has been lauded excessively by some United supporters ("Monet is painting his pictures again"), maligned unfairly by detractors

and, through it all, has kept his own counsel, letting his performances do service for the man.

He could have sunk like a pebble. Instead, through immense skill, force of character and no little dignity, he has reclaimed his reputation. He has been chivalrous, modest and served the team. He has adorned the game and brought joy to thousands. It is quite a story.

Leading article, page 19

THE TIMES MATCH-BY-MATCH GUIDE TO THE PREMIERSHIP TOMORROW

ARSENAL v BOLTON. A strange season for Bruce Rioch, in which Arsenal have rarely spotted but they are still only a win away from qualifying for the UEFA Cup next season. It says much for their durability, especially as they have had to do without the rock-solid Tony Adams for so long. For Bolton, advice: it has been nice knowing you but, frankly, make a safe return to where you belong. At least Stubbs, the Bolton defender, has one last chance to impress Rioch, his former manager, before the transfer opens. Stubbs for Highway next season? Set on it.

CHELSEA v BLACKBURN. An emotional afternoon at the Bridge as Chelsea travel. He has accepted the most unwanted job in football, that of England manager, and will forsake the delights of the King's Road for downtown Minsk and Tbilisi in the coming months. More fool him. The headlines are already being scripted: "Go, Glenn, in the name of Hod go!" "What a load of twaddle, Hoddle!" "Glenn's giraffe flop again!" In comparison, working alongside Ken Bates was a piece of cake.

COVENTRY v LEEDS. But for their early-season form, Leeds would be scraping it out with the Premiership also-rans. Thirteen defeats in 18 matches, including their last six in a row, have helped further pressure on Howard Wilkinson, who apparently finished a close second in the English managerial stakes. With their confidence shattered, Wilkinson's weary troops are unlikely to put up too much of a struggle as Coventry, all guns blazing, secure their safety in a blitz of brilliance. Big Ron could not have done more for it.

EVERTON v ASTON VILLA. Everton, with Horne and Hinchcliffe back from suspension, could just scrape into Europe. A record of only three defeats in 18 Premiership outings suggests they deserve the chance. Of greater significance is the appearance of Southgate, the Villa centre back, who returns to the fray after recovering from knee ligament damage. He needs a good run-out to enhance his chances of making Venables's Euro 96 squad and, such is his defensive or midfield versatility, he can back his place now, as long as the lads hold up.

MANCHESTER CITY v LIVERPOOL. Liverpool have little to enthuse about, and could well be in self-protective mode with the FA Cup Final in mind, but City still appear destined for the English Insurance League. They have hung on doggedly after the most appalling of starts — nine defeats in 11 matches — yet Alan Ball has always known that everything was stacked against him. The weather, pitches, referees, opponents, lucky bounces, deflections, etc. If City go down, perhaps he might take just a minute to examine the contribution of his players.

MIDDLESBROUGH v MANCHESTER UNITED. Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough player-manager, will urge on his players to upset the applecart tomorrow but, unless there is something strange lurking around the corner, United must clinch the championship for the third time in four seasons. All the closest United supporters can then come crawling out of woodland from Thornton Heath to Tibburto, and tell us what a great side they are and how they have always supported them. Sour grapes? You bet. The trouble is, Alex Ferguson's side can only get better.

NEWCASTLE v TOTTENHAM. Teddy Sheringham should stick to scoring goals. During a recent low-key appearance on *They Think It's All Over*, his most telling contribution was to mistake Lee Hunt's hilarious lung-in impression of Eric Cantona for the actor, Jean-Claude Van Damme, Mr Muscles from Brussels. Big day at St James', with Newcastle chasing the title and Tottenham on the brink of Europe. City that neither are likely to be successful, unless there are some strange results elsewhere, so the Premier's race should clean up on Tyneside.

WEST HAM v SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY. If Manchester City, Southampton and Coventry are victorious, and Wednesday lose at Upton Park, David Pleat's not-so-married band will be playing in the Endleigh League next season. Probably without David Pleat. They should get something though, with West Ham's rise into mid-table obscurity having somewhat spoiled their usual end-of-term panic. Judging by their collapse at Rangers last week, they are already thinking of sun, sand, sea, surf and something. Almost time to put on your knotted handkerchief, Julius.

NOTTINGHAM FOREST v QPR. Just as well Rangers do not need something from their visit to Nottingham — their fate having already been decided by the previous, calamitous eight months — as the boys from the Blue have never won a league match at the City Ground. At least they will be concentrating on persuading his better players, whoever they are, to stay at Loftus Road. For Forest, the season has petered out after promising so much. Unless Frank Clark impresses widely in a consistent goalkeeping, next term could see much of the same.

HOW THEY STAND. Table showing league positions, points, goal difference, and recent form for all 20 teams.

WHEN TO WATCH ON TELEVISION. Schedule of TV broadcasts for the matches, including Sky Sports and BBC 1.

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SOUTHAMPTON v WIMBLEDON. Nobody in their right minds would want to play Wimbledon at such a stage in the season, with such a lot depending on the future, with such a pressure-cooker scenario in prospect. Yet someone's got to do it and, tomorrow, Southampton lead the Premiership's most notorious party-poppers. La Tiesse's mind will still be bogging, now that Glenn Hoddle, his substitute, has been installed as England coach-in-waiting, and it could just be that he has been saving his best to last. Saints to hang on in there... Just.

WHEN TO WATCH ON TELEVISION. Schedule of TV broadcasts for the matches, including Sky Sports and BBC 1.

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Key to keeping staying the kit... Odds st... Dave Beaman

Ball pins hopes for survival on help from rivals

By Peter Ball. SOUTHAMPTON and Coventry City go into their final games of the season tomorrow knowing that if they win, they will retain their places in the FA Carling Premiership.

Coventry have what appears to be the easiest task with a game against Leeds United, whose defeat by Tottenham Hotspur on Thursday secured their sixth in succession, the club's worst run for 49 years.

Sunderland and Derby County are already promoted from the Endisleg Insurance League first division, but there is still a battle for the play-offs, with only Crystal Palace sure of a place so far.

In the second division, Oxford United will claim the second automatic promotion spot behind Swindon Town, the champions, if they beat Peterborough United today.

Dave Beasant is a settled man once more, Russell Kempson reports

Key to happy keeping is staying out of the kitchen

One of football's strangest stories involves a cupboard, a salad cream bottle and a former international goalkeeper. The injury sustained took three months to recover from, and the victim is still thriving in the FA Carling Premiership.

It gave him little chance to impress Glenn Hoddle, the newly-installed Chelsea manager, and he subsequently moved on to Southampton for £300,000.

Odds stacked against Scally playing the wag

Chairman comes on as late substitute and scores winning goal for club he rescued from relegation. When Paul Scally, chairman of Gillingham and Eddie the Eagle look-alike, registered as a player for the Endisleg Insurance League third division team, a comic cut as bizarre as Eddie Edwards' ski jumping at the Olympics began to take shape.



The threat of relegation notwithstanding, Beasant is enjoying life down at The Dell

done it, or even to have bought the T-shirt, he has experienced most of what football has to offer. The highs and lows, the sweet and sour.

David Powell on the chairman seeking to pull a winning stroke on the football pitch

on Gillingham's last match, at home to Scarborough today. Indeed, if Scally played, he would stand to win a £20,000 bet that he would appear in a League match for at least ten minutes. The money would pay for the players' end-of-season holiday in Barbados.

he did it was wrong. I didn't play for him again. Loan spells at Grimsby Town and Wolverhampton Wanderers followed; then a few matches back at the Bridge for Dave Webb, who replaced Porterfield; then the salad cream slip-up. A spell at The Dell provided a convenient solution. "It was an easy decision," he said.

Stark back in style to stake Badminton claim

By Jenny MacArthur. IAN STARK made a spectacular return to international competition with Lady Hartington's Stanwick Ghost when he moved into second place, 0.2 points behind David O'Connor, the overnight leader on Thursday, at the end of the dressage phase of the Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials yesterday.

Hendry on song with another final in his sights

By Phil Yates. STEPHEN HENDRY approached his fifth consecutive appearance in the final of the Embassy world snooker championship as he built a 10-4 overnight lead over Nigel Bond at The Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, yesterday. In increasing a 4-3 first-session advantage, Hendry provided evidence that, with impeccable timing, he could be running into his best form after, by his standards, low-key displays in the previous three rounds.

Two years ago, Stanwick Ghost, then eight, fell at The Quarry. He redeemed himself at Punctestown a month later when he was eighth, but in August of that year he struck into both his front tendons after tripping out of the water at Auchinleck. He did not compete again until March this year.

He is enjoying his football, too — he makes his 57th League appearance tomorrow — and has received more than the isolated plaudits this season. "It's nice to hear," he said. "You always do the best you can. Some players ease off when they get older but I'm working harder than ever."

Tomorrow's fixtures

Table listing football fixtures for tomorrow, including Premier League, Championship, and other divisions.

Stark back in style to stake Badminton claim

Stark produced a delightful test on Stanwick Ghost which earned a ten — the only one of the competition — for his final canter down the centre lane. Stark is hoping his luck holds for today.

Two years ago, Stanwick Ghost, then eight, fell at The Quarry. He redeemed himself at Punctestown a month later when he was eighth, but in August of that year he struck into both his front tendons after tripping out of the water at Auchinleck. He did not compete again until March this year.

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Table listing football fixtures for tomorrow, including Premier League, Championship, and other divisions.

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Table of today's fixtures for football, including Premier League, Championship, and other divisions.

Table of today's fixtures for rugby union, including Premiership, Championship, and other divisions.

Table of tomorrow's fixtures for football, including Premier League, Championship, and other divisions.

Table of tomorrow's fixtures for rugby league, including Super League, Championship, and other divisions.

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Leaders head for happy ending

Newcastle hope champion story has sting in tail

By Rob Hughes, Football Correspondent

LIKE a good Agatha Christie plot, the championship will be decided on the final turn of the page in the North East tomorrow. It has come down to this: Newcastle United must beat Tottenham Hotspur, a team desperate to win to qualify for Europe, at home; and Manchester United must lose at nearby Middlesbrough, a team playing only for pride.

Anything else will hand the FA Carling Premiership trophy to the Manchester club. Some believe that it is all over bar the shouting. I am not so certain, but I do concede that for Newcastle to win it now would need the fulfilment of Jack Charlton's prophecy that "if Kevin Keegan fell in the Tyne, he would come up with a salmon in his mouth".

There is, alas, a sour taste in many mouths instead of the absolute relish one should feel at this great suspense between the two clubs most committed to flair and panache. The whole plot is sullied by the final weeks' harsh words.

When Keegan delivered his emotional outburst on Sky Television last Monday, every amateur psychoanalyst conjectured on his state of mind. He is losing it, they concluded; Alex Ferguson's psychological games have got to him.

For those who saw the broadcast, the jabbing finger, let me tell you where I stand: I would love it... love it, if Newcastle overturned the 10-1 bookmakers' odds against them winning their first championship for 69 years.

I have nothing against Ferguson's achievement of this season. He pitched youth into a Manchester United team shorn of Kanchelskis, Ince and Hughes. He has cajoled them to within two games of the League and FA Cup "double". His reserve team and A team have won their leagues, his stadium has grown to a 55,000 all-seat capacity... such magnificent style.

But what stuck in Keegan's throat was the way Ferguson used to try to tweak an advantage in the final furlong. Saying that Leeds United players were "cheating their manager" and implying they would let Newcastle rather than Manchester win the League, incensed more than Keegan. Was it paranoia or was it as last season when Ferguson maintained a con-

stant insinuation that Blackburn Rovers' nerve would crack, cynical manipulation of the media to try by unsporting means to affect the contest?

Keegan, whatever else motivates him, swears by the intrinsic honesty of English football. He probably had every intention of speaking his mind last Monday, but was caught with his defences down by taking the microphone 30 seconds after the heart-stopping end to Newcastle's encounter at Leeds.

Keegan, his nerve jangling.

THE LAST LAP

P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	37	24	7	6	70	35
Newcastle	37	24	5	8	65	36

UPS AND DOWNS

PREMIERSHIP: Relegated: Bolton Wanderers, QPR and one of Manchester City, Southampton, Coventry City, Sheffield Wednesday and Wimbledon.

ENGLISH INSURANCE LEAGUE: First division: Champions: Sunderland. Also promoted: Derby County. Play-offs: Crystal Palace and three from Stoke City, Charlton Athletic, Ipswich Town and Leicester City. Relegated: Luton Town and two from Watford, Portsmouth and Millwall.

SECOND DIVISION: Champions: Swinton Town. Also promoted: One from Oxford United and one from Notts County. Play-offs: Four from Oxford, Blackpool, Notts Co, Crawley Alexandra, Bradford City, Stockport County, Chesterfield, Wrexham and Bristol Rovers. Relegated: Hull City, Brighton and Hove Albion, Swindon City and other Carlsberg United or York City.

THIRD DIVISION: Champions: Preston North End or Gillingham. Also promoted: Preston and Gillingham and one from Darlington, Bury and Plymouth Argyle. Play-offs: Four from Darlington, Bury, Plymouth, Harlow United, Wigan Athletic, Colchester United, Chester City and Barnet. Relegated: no relegation.

should have ducked the interview, taken a cold shower, made Sky wait 15 minutes. But impulse drove him to his triumph of willpower over lack of innate skill as a player. Impulse brought him back into football after seven years on the golf course and breeding racehorses.

Impulse was the making of him and, if we are not careful, will be the breaking of him. He did not speak this week of the unfairness of his team being scheduled, for the benefit of television, to three games in seven days compared with Manchester's two in eight. He did not speak with the thrill that has been in him all season, or with the charisma that has charmed so many.

Of course, while Ferguson's "babes" have been guided immaculately through a transitional season and have

amazed older professionals by their quality and stamina, there have been those who point out that Keegan has "bought" near equality by spending £36 million. As ever, it is almost true; but Steve Watson, Robbie Elliott, Lee Clark and Steve Howey, not to mention the repatriated Geordie, Peter Beardsley, have made contributions that show that native talent has played its full part in Newcastle's regeneration.

Keegan must have seethed when critics questioned his £7 million acquisition of the bewitching but untrustworthy Colombian, Faustino Asprilla. But, if anyone claims to have had foresight about the troubles, as well as the hypnotic skills, he might bring, which of us suspected how right Keegan would prove on the purchase of David Batty?

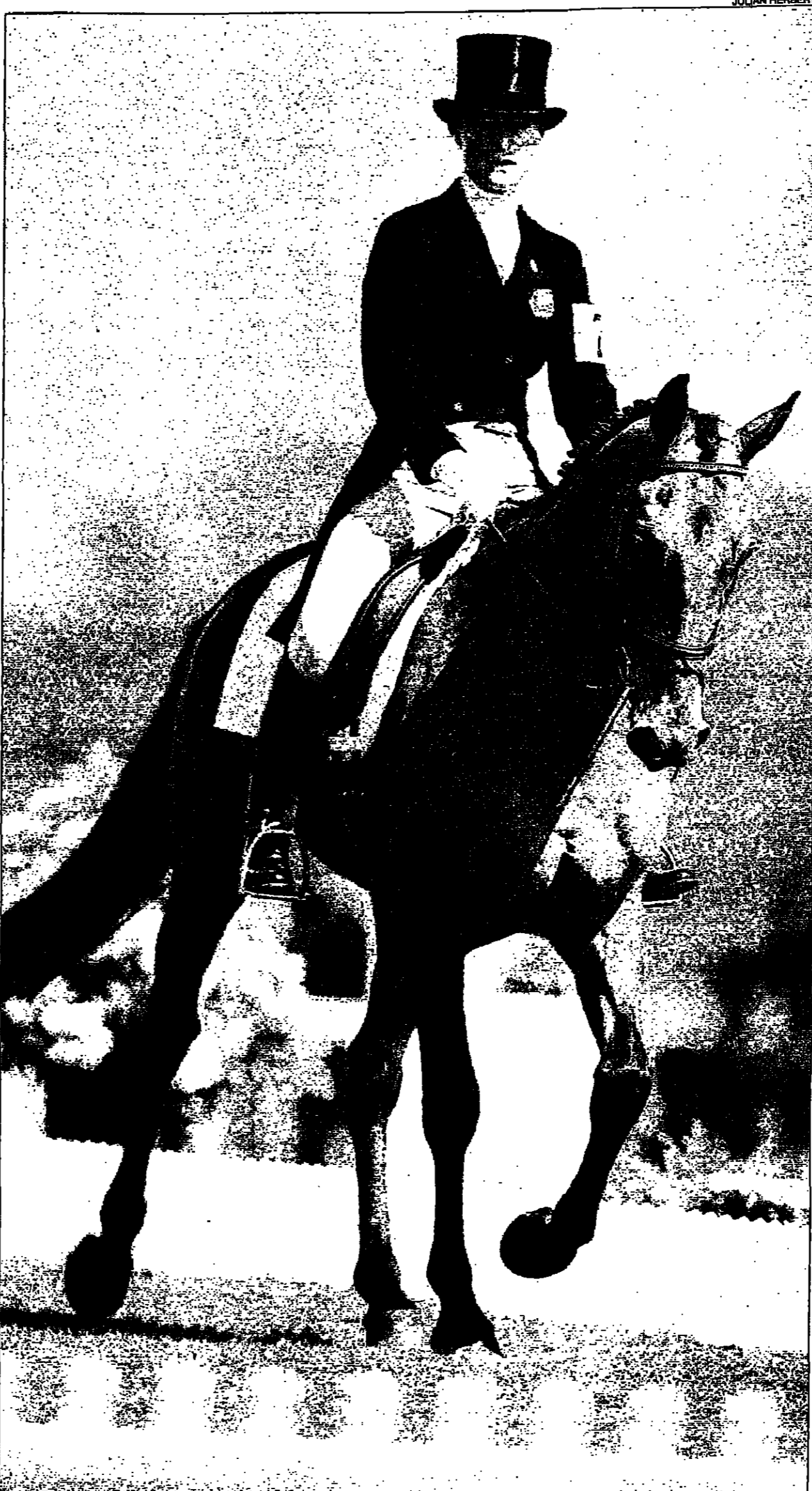
A little scrapper, we opined, a destructive individual. After ten games, it has to be said that Batty has been a revelation as Newcastle's attacking midfield fulcrum. He tightened up the vulnerable area in front of the back four, he displayed a contagious spirit in a team suffering nerve fatigue; without him Newcastle would not now be holding on to Manchester United's shirt-tails.

But still they need that last twist to the plot. Only ten times since the war has the championship run to the last hour. Manchester United need only to draw to be crowned, and would be accomplished champions, a reasonable bet for their second "double" in three years.

But, when their manager suggested that all teams may not try their best, he should have known that two can play the devious mind game. How would he feel if he achieves everything and fingers point to the fact that his final game is against a team managed by Bryan Robson, a Manchester United player for more than a decade, or that the FA Cup Final referee, Dermot Gallagher, was a Manchester United supporter?

Unworthy suggestions, both. We should dismiss them out of hand, we should not sink to the poisonous side-show that sours the prospect tomorrow will bring.

Camera portrait, page 42
 Settled Seasant, page 43



Karen Dixon, on Too Smart, gave the Great Britain Olympic selectors some cheer with an impressive test during the second day of dressage at the Mitsubishi Motors Badminton Horse Trials yesterday. Report, page 43

Quinnell offered new route back to his roots

By Christopher Irvine

RICHMOND rugby union club, having extended its plundering grasp to Wales and Bath, reached even further afield yesterday; to rugby league. Scott Quinnell, who moved to Wigan from Llanelli two years ago, has been offered a £200,000, three-year deal by the Courage League second division club and could form a formidable back-row partnership with Ben Clark—the England pack leader for most of this season.

Wigan are not as resigned to losing Quinnell, who has two years of a £250,000 contract left to run at Central Park, as Bath are to the departure of Clark. Nonetheless, an inflated wage bill and a limit on rugby league salaries next season could influence the decision of the Wigan board.

The pity for Wigan is that Quinnell's potential is just emerging, concurrent with his establishing a first-team place in the past six months. "It's now a free market and we have to accept our players will be targets for union," Jack Robinson, the Wigan chairman, said.

Like Bath, Wigan are under financial pressures that threaten the fabric of the side. Two more of Bath's England internationals, Mike Catt and Victor Uboegbu, have also been linked to Richmond, who have already secured the services of Adrian Davies and Andy Moore, both from Cardiff.

Should Quinnell, 23, move, he would complete the Super League season before joining Richmond in mid-September. His quick return to union would be a further boon for Welsh rugby union. David Young, the former international prop forward, said this week he is to rejoin Cardiff next season from Salford.

Final reckoning, page 41

Lewis has Tyson in sight

LENNOX LEWIS could challenge Mike Tyson for the World Boxing Council (WBC) heavyweight championship in July (Srikumar Sen writes). After a double reversal in the courts in the United States, on Wednesday and Thursday, Don King, Tyson's promoter, was ready for talks with Lewis. King wants to stage the bout in Las Vegas in July and it only remains for him to pay Lewis the money he wants for the match to be made.

On Wednesday, three appeal court judges denied Tyson, King and the WBC the right to appeal against an earlier court ruling that Tyson should defend his title against nobody else but Lewis next. On Thursday, Bruce Seldon, another King heavyweight, failed in the Superior Court in New Jersey to secure a bout with Tyson before Lewis. After each case, King spoke to Panos Eliades, Lewis's financial backer, to arrange a contest between with Tyson, on Thursday offering \$10 million, which was rejected.

Tyson must meet Lewis by September. It is now a question of whether King puts on the bout, or Panos Eliades's promotion company. If King wants the promotion, he will have to pay about \$20 million or allow the bout to go to pursue offers and risk losing it to HBO, bitter rivals of Showtime, the television company behind King and Tyson.

Briatore baffled by another bad day for Benetton

FROM OLIVER HOLT IN IMOLA

FLAVIO BRIATORE can dress mutton as lamb with the best of them. The Benetton managing director's skies are always blue, the prospects always good. He is a natural at dismissing rumours with a one-liner and in greeting reverses as though they were astonishing pieces of good fortune. So when he says things can't get any worse, they must be bad.

At Ferrari, Michael Schumacher is busy saying things are bad. The only explanation is, that after so much success, he must have forgotten what "bad" is. "Bad", even in yesterday's relatively unrepresentative practice sessions, is finishing thirteenth and fourteenth respectively as Benetton's Jean Alesi and Gerhard Berger did. "Bad" is definitely not ending the day more than

0.6sec clear of one's nearest challengers, which was Schumacher's achievement.

That sent the legions of Ferrari fans who camp on the hillsides above the Rivazza curve and pack the stands around the Tosa corner away in a frenzy of happiness. Benetton are officially Italian as well now, but their performance did not create quite the same reaction. The representatives of the Berger fan club, who had hung banners of praise on the fences opposite the pits, took them down sheepishly.

Their results have been so parlous this year it is easy to forget that Benetton are the reigning world champions, that Schumacher won two drivers' titles with them in the two years before he flew the coop. At the European Grand Prix at Nürburgring last weekend, things reached a new low: Berger finished ninth, Alesi crashed on the second

lap. As they prepare for tomorrow's San Marino Grand Prix here, Benetton have only 13 points compared to Williams's 55.

"If we fail in the next three races," Briatore said, amid the usual banter yesterday, "then we can forget about this season and start building the car for 1997. But anything that

happens on Sunday can only be good. Anything that happens has to be better than the last race. It will be very difficult to be any worse than that."

Briatore called Berger and Alesi into a crisis meeting here on Thursday which lasted for more than three hours. He pleaded with

Alesi, in particular, to try to develop some patience, to concentrate on crucial points of the race like pit stops and the entries and exits to and from them rather than just trying to be fastest.

"There are bound to be problems when you have two new drivers who have been somewhere else for five years," Briatore said. "When you leave your wife and go with your girlfriend, it is a shock for the first few weeks. It takes a little time."

"There was no shouting. We are not talking with children. We are talking with people who have been in this business for a long time. It is not like I am telling them they cannot have another piece of chocolate. But I still think it is possible they will be the strongest challengers to Hill this season. I believe they are both quicker than Schumacher. Things will improve."

performance yesterday. He said he had set his quickest time with hardly any fuel on board and that he suspected the Williams-Renaults of Jacques Villeneuve and Damon Hill, which finished third and sixth respectively, had been running on full tanks.

Hill certainly seemed confident there was plenty of room for improvement in this afternoon's sole qualifying session. Despite the blip in his otherwise flawless season at Nürburgring, where he finished fourth, he is likely to start as favourite for tomorrow's race.

To the disappointment of those who thought his nerve might have been affected by his brush with adversity, he seems relaxed and happy. One journalist, who criticised his performance in Germany, asked him if he was looking for revenge tomorrow. "Only over you," Hill said.

DETAILS FROM IMOLA

PRACTICE TIMES: 1, M Schumacher (Ben) Ferrari 1:29.858; 2, R Barrichello (Ben) Jordan 1:29.921; 3, J Villeneuve (Can) Williams 1:29.921; 4, M Hakkinen (Fin) McLaren 1:29.984; 5, D Pironi (Fr) Ligier 1:30.130; 6, D Hill (GB) Williams 1:30.418; 7, D Coulthard (GB) McLaren 1:30.420; 8, E Irvine (GB) Ferrari 1:30.433; 9, H-H Fentzen (Ger) Sauber 1:30.462; 10, J Herbert (GB) Sauber 1:30.570; 11, M Brundage (GB) Jordan 1:30.822; 12, J Verstappen (Ned) Footwork 1:31.182; 13, J Alesi (Fr) Benetton 1:31.513; 14, G Berger (Austria) Benetton 1:31.654; 15, M Salo (Fin) Tyrrell 1:31.970; 16, R Rosset (It) Footwork 1:32.560; 17, G Falcetta (It) Minardi 1:33.006; 18, U Katayama (Japan) Tyrrell 1:33.377; 19, P Lamy (Fr) Minardi 1:33.439; 20, A Montanari (It) Forti 1:34.022; 21, L Badoer (It) Forti 1:37.963; 22, P Dinz (Br) Ligier 1:51.760

CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (after 4 rounds): Drivers: 1, Hill 32pts; 2, Villeneuve 22, equal 3, Alesi, Schumacher 10; 5, Irvine, 6, equal 8, Hakkinen, Barrichello 5; 8, Coulthard 4; equal 11, Berger, Salo 3; equal 11, Pironi, Westphalen, Brundage 1; Constructors: 1, Williams 55pts; 2, Ferrari 16; 3, Benetton 13; 4, McLaren 9; 5, Jordan 6; 6, Tyrrell 3; equal 7, Ligier, Footwork 1

REMAINING GRANDS PRIX: Tomorrow: San Marino, Imola, May 19; Monaco, Monte Carlo June 2; Spanish, Barcelona, June 16; Canadian, Montreal, June 23; French, Magny Cours, July 14; British, Silverstone, July 28; German, Hockenheim, Aug 11; Hungarian, Budapest, Aug 26; Belgian, Spa-Francorchamps, Sept 8; Italian, Monza, Sept 22; Portuguese, Estoril, Oct 13; Japanese, Suzuka.



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Hezbollah used UN base to avoid wrath of Israel

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

A UNITED NATIONS inquiry has found that Hezbollah guerrillas were sheltering in the UN base at Qana in southern Lebanon when Israel shelled the compound, killing about 100 refugees.

The confidential report, prepared by Major-General Frank van Kappen, says two of three guerrillas sought sanctuary in the base after firing a salvo of rockets on April 18. The finding, which will embarrass the organisation, says the guerrillas were "in the habit" of taking shelter at the base, which was packed last month with refugees fleeing from Israel's Operation Grapes of Wrath offensive.

On the day of the massacre, the guerrillas fired two Katyusha rockets and eight mortars from a position 300 yards from the UN base, headquarters of a Fijian peacekeeping battalion. The Israeli Defence Forces responded by shelling the base. The inquiry was also told that Israel had an unmanned surveillance aircraft over the area at the time.

The presence of Hezbollah guerrillas inside the base does not absolve Israel from blame for targeting a UN compound crowded with civilians, but it does raise doubts about the role of the peacekeeping force.

The UN has given Israel until Monday to respond to the charge that it deliberately targeted the base. The Israelis are expected to admit that the local commander was culpable, and that there was an error in the chain of command which allowed the shelling to go ahead.

The UN argues that peacekeepers have no mandate to

stop Hezbollah. Since the Qana attack, officials have pointed out that three peacekeepers have been shot this year when they tried to stop the pro-Iranian terrorist faction from attacking Israel. They say it is not unreasonable to allow unarmed men into a base where their families may be sheltering.

The United States is trying to prevent publication of the report because of fears that it will disrupt the fragile ceasefire, negotiated by Washington, in southern Lebanon and undermine the credibility of the UN force there.

Boutros Boutros Ghali, the UN Secretary-General, is instead expected to give an verbal report to the Security Council next week as a sop to Arab nations clamouring for condemnation of Israel.

Jerusalem: Israel has angered Palestinian leaders by declaring it is "in no hurry to fix a date" for a partial withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank town of Hebron (Ross Dunn writes). It said any redeployment would not begin before the elections on May 29. A total withdrawal was to have been completed more than a month ago.

Letters, page 19

Recognition offer denied

A SENIOR Hezbollah member denied yesterday he had offered to recognise Israel if Israeli troops withdrew from southern Lebanon (Our Foreign Staff writes). Sheikh Kadir Nouria said recognition of Israel "is against Hezbollah's fundamental principles".

Earlier, in an interview with *The Times*, the sheikh said Hezbollah "did not want to displace the Jews" and was "ready to make peace" if Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon. But this did not amount to a willingness to recognise the Jewish state.



Jump lead: Jochen Schweizer combines bungee jumping with cycling yesterday as he leaps with his bicycle from a 425ft-high platform on Hamburg's TV Tower

American plane flew from Britain 'to spy on France'

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

AN American U2 plane based in Britain spied on sensitive French military installations in March, a French newspaper reported yesterday.

The aircraft took off from an air base in England and then flew over and photographed military areas, including a plant where French nuclear warheads are assembled, a tank-testing area and an air base, the daily *Libération* newspaper reported yesterday, citing "reliable French military sources".

The US Air Force plane was reportedly picked up by French radar and tracked while circling over the sensitive sites. It was flying at an altitude of 65,000ft, beyond the range of interceptors, the *Libération* report says.

Both French and US officials played down the alleged incident, pointing out the US could have obtained the same photographic information from satellites. However, a French defence expert said yesterday that, while the US could monitor the military sites with satellites, the quality of photographs from a U2 would be superior. "You still cannot get better than U2 surveillance," the expert, who declined to be identified, said.

The US Embassy in Paris issued an emphatic denial of the report, saying: "Our aircraft do not use their surveillance equipment, not even for testing, over French territory. French installations are never under surveillance."

The US Air Force said the plane's pilot was burning fuel to ensure a softer landing, but the incident may strain military co-operation at a time when France is moving closer to resuming a military role in Nato.

Earlier this year, for the first time since France left Nato in 1966, Paris allowed America to station planes permanently on French soil. Three U2s are now based at Istres in the Mediterranean, flying missions over Bosnia. "The Americans must not think they can

do anything because we have accommodated them," one military official said.

Libération speculated that the U2 may be connected with France's increased defence co-operation with its European allies and, in particular, growing military links with Britain.

On March 16 a convoy left the Valduc nuclear plant for the Dijon-Longvic air base, two of the sites allegedly photographed. *Libération* reported that two RAF Hercules transport planes departed from the Dijon base soon afterwards and might have contained materials for building nuclear warheads for Trident submarines.

Charles Millon, the French Defence Minister, said yesterday that he did not intend to make an issue "with one of our allies over an article in the press in which there is not an element of proof".

Relations between America and France on matters of espionage have been tense since January last year when France expelled five CIA officers on suspicion of spying.

The Ministry of Defence confirmed yesterday that an American U2 made a flight through French airspace on March 16 but insisted it was routine.

Millon denied any RAF Hercules flight had taken off from Dijon that day.



Millon: report has "not an element of proof"

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Dole adopts tougher line with Clinton

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

BOB DOLE is preparing an aggressive new offensive against President Clinton in an attempt to revive his faltering presidential campaign.

The Republican nominee has just recruited one of the toughest political advertisement makers in the business. In New York last night he was delivering what an adviser called "as close to a red-meat speech as Dole has given so far". In an interview with *The Wall Street Journal* yesterday, the 72-year-old senator described his determination to portray Mr Clinton as an incurable baby-boomer liberal.

"The President talks a great game, and right now 55 per cent of the people view him as a moderate. We need to change that," Mr Dole said.

"I believe we can demonstrate he has more trust in the government and I have more trust in the people." Asked what his campaign bumper sticker would be he quipped: "Bob Dole - Adult".

Mr Dole has already begun to attack the President for appointing liberal judges, raising taxes, supporting extreme abortion techniques and neglecting America's defences. Next week the senator will summon several heavyweight economists to Washington to help him to develop a pro-growth economic agenda concentrating on tax cuts.

Immigration change: A Bill cracking down on illegal immigration was passed overwhelmingly by the Senate on Thursday night. The House of Representatives earlier passed similar legislation and Mr Clinton is expected to approve the Senate version.

NEWS IN BRIEF

94 years' jail for subway firebomber

New York: An unemployed computer analyst who planned to terrorise the underground system here has been sentenced to a maximum 94 years in jail for maiming Christmas rush-hour passengers in a series of subway bombs (Tom Rhodes writes).

Edward Leary, 51, planted firebombs on two trains in 1994 to extort money. Three people were seriously hurt and 47 suffered burns.

Landmine blow

Geneva: Delegates from 55 UN countries ignored calls for a landmine ban - now not possible before 2001 - but did outlaw undetectable anti-personnel mines and tighten restrictions on others. (Reuter)

Hostage visit

Jakarta: A Red Cross official and a doctor will fly to Irian Jaya province in Indonesia tomorrow to meet 11 hostages - four of whom are British - held since early January by separatist rebels. (Reuter)

Killer executed

San Quentin: A man who once said, "I love to kill", was executed by lethal injection for shooting dead three people over a stolen cheque. Keith Williams, 48, was put to death at the prison here. (AP)

Law chief hunted

Bogotá: Colombia's Supreme Court has ordered the arrest of Orlando Vasquez Velasquez, the Attorney General, whose whereabouts are unknown, on corruption charges linked to the drug cartels. (Reuter)

Post dispute delivers blow to Olympic plans

Washington: Ten weeks before the opening of the Atlanta Games, a dispute of Olympian proportions has erupted between the organisers and the American Postal Service (Martin Fletcher writes).

The US Olympic Committee is threatening to sue the Postal Service to stop it selling unauthorised Olympic T-shirts. The Postal Service is refusing to deliver post to the 10,000 athletes in the Olympic village. The dispute arose after a congressional edict stopping the Postal Service sponsoring the Games as it did in Barcelona.

The Atlanta-based United Parcel Service (UPS), stepped in, paying \$30 million (£20 million) for the honour. The committee said the Postal Service could open offices in the village, but only to sell stamps. The Postal Service called the committee "almost paranoid".

House of Orange concerned about spread of unseemly Windsor behaviour

'Clown prince' is no joke

THERE are those who chart the decline of the House of Windsor to the embarrassing *It's A Knockout* spectacle in which sundry princes and princesses sprinted for charity.

The House of Orange might, then, have cause for concern: balanced on the head of Crown Prince Willem Alexander this week was a beautiful blonde acrobat in some kind of medieval garb. Worse, the Dutch prince—known to friends and commoners as Alex—looked as if he were enjoying himself.

There is a deep fear in the royal families of Europe about the possible spread of the Windsor syndrome. Girlfriends, potential wives, boyfriends and suitors have never been scrutinised so closely. In The Netherlands, one adored queen, Juliana, handed over to her daughter, Queen Beatrix, who is now 58, and so far all seems to have gone swimmingly. As was evident from this week's Queen's Day celebrations—marking Juliana's 87th birthday and the sixteenth anniversary of Beatrix's coronation—the Queen is as popular a figure as her mother. However, the chubby, clubby crown prince does not seem to possess the same magic. And the closer one examines the family, the more one discovers personal oddities more appropriate to the Windsors: a princess who talks to trees, a queen who relied heavily on the advice of a fortune-teller, a clinically depressed consort, and a crown prince who is said to hunt with dum-dum bullets.

AMSTERDAM FILE

by ROGER BOYES



Prince Willem Alexander has come close to rupturing the respectful relationship between the Dutch press and the monarchy with his extravagantly staged hunting expeditions. On the Apeldoorn estate he and his grandfather, Prince Bernhard, made gamekeepers drive deer alongside the royal Ranger Rovers so that more elderly guests could make their kills without getting their feet wet.

On another occasion, Prince Willem Alexander was hunting wild boar and there were scuffles between his bodyguards and animal rights protesters. The claim about the dum-dum bullets arose from that incident.

The Crown Prince is 29 and since his 18th birthday has been KIO—*Koning in Opleiding*, or trainee king. Over the past

11 years he has not demonstrated a shining ambition for the throne, however. He has a passion for flying, racing cars, deep sea diving and ice-skating. Nine out of ten Dutch citizens regard Queen Beatrix as the ideal monarch; their views on the Prince can only be guessed at.

His girlfriends are now presented to his parents. The latest is a blonde, bright law student who is a commoner and a Roman Catholic. The prince claims that the question of religion is unimportant, although since the 16th century rulers of the House of Orange-Nassau have always been Reform Calvinists. This disregard for tradition may be a healthy sign—or it might spell trouble.

Perhaps the oddest member of the family is Princess Irene, Queen Beatrix's younger sister, who has just published a bestselling book about communing with nature. She talks to animals, trees and rocks and, more remarkably, they talk back. She reveals that she first talked to a tree in the grounds of the Dutch church in London when she was 14. The tree invited her to play underneath its branches. She has never looked back, although she has renounced her right of succession. Sad: Princess Irene would certainly have given the Windsors a run for their money.



Prince Willem Alexander of The Netherlands, right, helps an acrobat to balance on his head during the celebrations for the Queen's Day

Fight to save Dutch from damnation

A NATIONAL campaign against blasphemy is gathering force in The Netherlands.

Railway stations now carry posters proclaiming: "Missed your train? Cursing doesn't help!" Television commercials urge the Dutch not to swear like troopers.

Anti-blasphemy lobbyists launched a protest campaign against a Korean car company which played with the Ten Commandments in its advertising. The offending advertisement was later withdrawn.

The Association Against Cursing, which was set up in 1917 by Jan Baas, a Calvinist, now has 18,000 registered members and many sponsors (not only from the churches). It never sleeps, and remains on constant alert for spluttered "damnations".

Rijk van de Poll notes that the Dutch who live in the Roman Catholic south curse far more than their counterparts in the Protestant north. He would like to make the anti-blasphemy cause international, but so far it has failed to set the Continent alight.

"Only the Scots have followed our example, with a League for the Increase of Pure Speech," he says.

Rome ill-prepared for the millennium

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

A SENIOR Vatican official yesterday joined a former minister to give a warning that Rome was dangerously ill-prepared for an impending "invasion" of 40 million pilgrims for the millennium celebrations.

The outgoing interim Government of Lamberto Dini this week belatedly approved funds for millennium projects in Rome, including the redevelopment of Fiumicino airport.

Francesco Rutelli, the Mayor of Rome, has been working with the Vatican to co-ordinate joint projects, including the construction of a new underground line from the Colosseum to St Peter's Square and huge underground car parks near the Tiber.

But yesterday Cardinal Camillo Ruini, the head of the Italian Bishops' Conference, resigned as director of Peregrinatio ad Petri Sedem, the organisation responsible for taking pilgrims to Rome for the Jubilee. The post was taken over by Archbishop Sergio Sebastiani, who is in overall charge of Vatican arrangements for the Holy Year.

The sudden concentration of powers in the hands of Archbishop Sebastiani suggests a degree of mild panic. He said he was worried that, although there were only three and a half years to go, many of the millennium projects had not

even begun. The Archbishop suggested it might be better to leave disruptive projects, such as the new underground, until 2004, when Rome hopes to host the Olympic Games.

Alberto Ronchey, a former Minister of Culture who lives in the medieval quarter next to the Vatican known as the Borgo, said Rome was incapable of handling 40 million pilgrims and tourists. "This is an ancient city, not a new creation like Brasilia or Canberra," he told *La Repubblica*. "The residents of the Borgo are up in arms".

Signor Ronchey said the underground line would take many years to build, and the tunnellers would have to cope with layers of Roman history along the way, as well as mud and clay under the Tiber. He said that Pope John Paul II had announced grandiose plans for the Jubilee to round off his papacy, and the city authorities had weakly bowed to the wishes of the Vatican as a "world power".

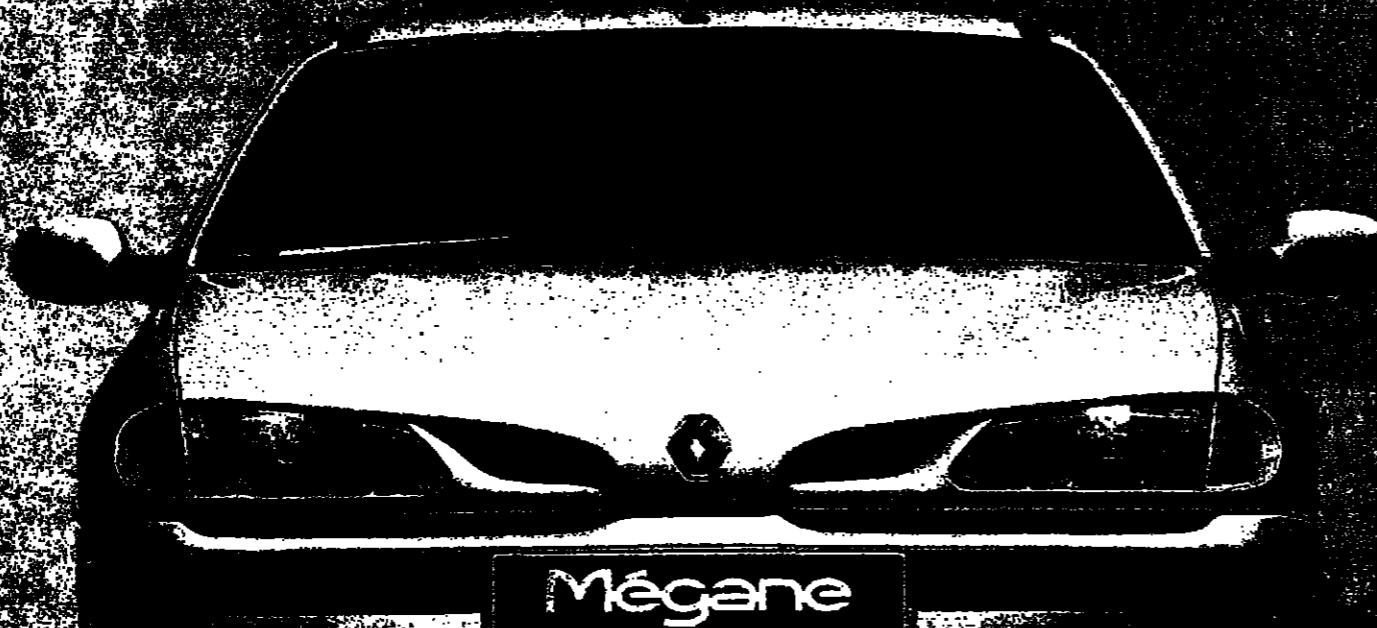
"Millions of pilgrims and tourists will come here and find one vast open-air building site," he said. □ **Agca appeal:** A lawyer representing Mehmet Ali Agca, the Turkish terrorist who shot and wounded the Pope in May 1981, said she would apply for his release. Marina Magistrelli said Agca had been in jail for 15 years.

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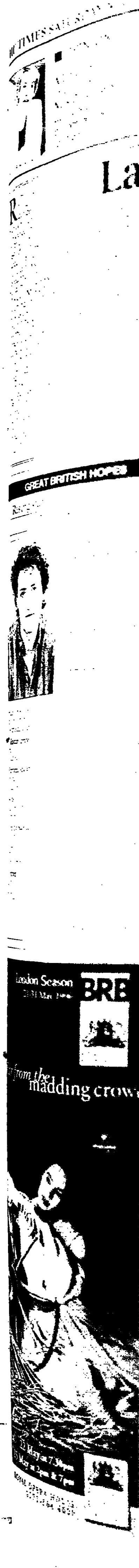
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OPINION

A little late in the day, Mrs Bottomley delivers a proper policy for heritage

THEATRE

A children's world with a nasty twist is recreated in a new staging of Potter's Blue Remembered Hills

THE TIMES ARTS

RISING STAR

Addicted to his writing: Tobias Hill is the latest bright hope of the poetic classes

ON MONDAY

Playing at being Monroe: Lisa Eichhorn prepares for a new stage version of The Misfits

Rarely do I feel sorry for Virginia Bottomley, our gorgeous, pouting Heritage Secretary. In fact until recently I considered her a bit of a disappointment. Her "Drusilla the Mad Ave-Lady" image when she was in charge of Health led me to expect wild and bloody deeds when she tackled the arts. That would have been a thrilling spectacle. Instead, Mrs B has undergone a disturbing metamorphosis. Now she is like some jolly Auntie to the Nation, forever wittering on about how the lottery - which she ranks somewhere between the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the Eroica Symphony in the league of human accomplishment - is going to transform our lives. By comparison to Ginny, Voltaire's Candide was a morbid pessimist. But I'll say this: she tries hard. No previous Tory Arts Minister has made such efforts to understand the problems of Britain's cultural life, except perhaps David Mellor - and unfortunately he became the problem.

Last chance to win the popular vote

This week Mrs B tried especially hard. She launched a big new policy document, People Taking Part, with a detailed speech. The Heritage Department proudly sent out - wait for it - a press release. That makes at least two in three years. "Virginia Bottomley Sets Out Her Vision For Access To Our National Arts And Heritage," it trumpeted grandly. So how was she received? With a starchy rebuke from a Daily Telegraph editorial for dangerous egalitarianism? With mocking scorn from some unreconstructed Marxist on The Guardian? Well, no. The sad fact is that nobody noticed. The minister with responsibility for television, radio, sport, publishing, the press, theatre, music, films and museums made a major mission statement... and won fewer column inches than Glenn Hoddle's haircut.

That's why I feel sorry for Mrs B. It's also why I feel sorry for Great Britain plc. We are up to our necks in trivia. Soon we will drown. Of course, Mrs B's speech did have one drawback. It was rather like those wonderful "get off your chest" meetings in offices, where the management says: "You can discuss anything you want, except money". Mrs B's speech discussed everything - except the level of government subsidy to the arts, the single most contentious issue. Still, let us not be churlish. She did say some important things. She pointed out that, in their leisure time, people want to "enjoy themselves and make friends, to understand what is going on, to be welcomed, and to be able to relate new experiences to their lives in some way". But all too often, especially in the high arts, "these simple needs are overlooked, and



RICHARD MORRISON

our heritage is presented in an unresponsive way, because that's the way it has always been done". From now on, she implied, the great Heritage Department machine will go into overdrive to ensure

accessibility to the arts. Subsidised arts companies will have to brush up their "customer care" and establish much better links with schools, while lottery money will be diverted to introduce more children properly to the arts. You might wonder why it has taken this Government 17 years to realise that it is educating a nation of philistines, but don't ask me to unravel the intricacies of the political mind. Most intriguingly, Mrs B proposes new schemes to harness the energy of amateurs. There are already, she says, 25,000 volunteers working in museums around the country, while amateur dramatic societies play a staggering 66,000 shows to 11.9 million people each year. Mrs B believes voluntary arts participation is potentially a gigantic growth area - especially in these, er, leisurely

times. "The notion of 'a job for life' is no longer something people expect," she says - a trifle disingenuously, you may think. Her speech even had a Witticism: "Having spent some years as Health Secretary trying to add years to life I do feel a responsibility to help add 'life to years'." Gosh. Who said satire was dead? It is easy to be cynical about Mrs B's ideas. Why, some might ask, would a politician want more people working in the arts for nothing, except as a way of pruning the professional arts still further? Already there is a terrible row in Surrey - in Mrs B's own constituency, in fact - because an affluent amateur theatre group has been awarded nearly £1 million from the lottery to rebuild its premises, while nearby professional theatres have either closed or are tottering on the brink.

But I have an awful suspicion that Mrs B is being sincere. She really does believe that it is crucial to break down the barriers - psychological, social and educational - that stop millions of people from enjoying the arts. And she is right. Now, however, she must turn fine words into deeds. That won't be easy. Too many arts organisations still pay lip-service to "accessibility" while clinging to their clabby, cliquy old ways. Mrs B must bang heads together. But she is fast running out of time. It would be ironic if, after 17 years, the Tories finally produced a sane arts policy, only to be booted out of office before bringing it into effect. Still, never mind. Labour's arts spokesman, the Eton-educated Mark Fisher, has declared that his party would give a high priority to (guess what?) "access" and "arts education". Strange how great minds think alike. And average minds too, of course.

GREAT BRITISH HOPES Rising stars in the arts firmament TOBIAS HILL Age: 25 Profession: Poet Call that a profession? Hill's poems earn his keep with phenomenal efficiency. During the past two years he has, roughly, won a prize every fortnight, including the £5,000 Eric Gregory Poetry Award. Tall stories, surely? All right, some wins have been for short stories. Skin won a BBC Radio First Bite Award. Imminent: He is reading at the Hay Festival (May 23-25) and at the Festival Hall (June 4). His poems will be published in September by Oxford University Press, followed by his short stories, published by Faber. "I've been writing a screenplay and a children's book," Hill says. Infant genius? "When I was eight," he admits, "I wrote a novel. I wrote my first poem at 11. I knew that was what I wanted to do." Current odd jobs: Literary reviewing. Hill is also the voice of the nation. At least, he speaks for "Outrage of Tunbridge Wells" et al on Feedback. Roots: His father was the former Times journalist George Hill. His mother was, until recently, an arts editor at HarperCollins. "So both were bookish," he explains. North London lad: Reared in Kentish Town, Hill is now just up the road. In between, he ran a school in Japan. "I sent a barrage of poems from there and started winning competitions here, with readings attached. I thought I could be a poet from the middle of a rice field but you can't." On writing: "I find myself writing about time and memory, being in transit. Cities interest me," he observes. "I am influenced by Japan. I like poetry that's pared down without losing complexity. Writing is an addiction, too. A day without it and I get the shakes." KATE BASSETT

THEATRE: Revival of Dennis Potter's play is too big for its breeches Less enchantment to the déjà vu Dennis Potter's 1979 television play famously cast adults as children, seven-year-olds squabbling, scrapping, kissing their dolls, pretending to be Spitfires (the setting is the summer holiday of 1943) and playing practical jokes on each other, the last of which goes tragically wrong. It packs a punch on the stage as well, although if the characters were 12 or 13, as in Wedekind's Spring Awakening, where young-looking adults play the roles without any fuss being made of it, the sorrow and terror of the story would not be seriously diminished. Perhaps Potter needed them to be seven years old because that was his age in 1943. Patrick Marber's production makes me realise that there are two sharply contrasting ways of directing this piece. Five years ago, on the tiny stage of the Man in the Moon, Terra Firma played it simply. Half-a-dozen chairs served as fallen trees in the wood, where every snapping twig might alert the escaped Italian prisoner. Then, when arranged in a line, they became the barn door that blocks the way back to the "land of lost content". That production had mature actors with strong thighs inside their grey shorts, actresses whose breasts bobbed within their navy jumpers, but after the few minutes required for adjustment the daring quaintness of Potter's device became just another theatrical convention. Patricia Doyle's direction certainly never sought to draw our attention to it. At the other extreme, Marber never wants us to forget the contrivance for long. A pastoral landscape designed by Richard Hudson slopes steeply beyond a cow chewing the cud, a line of ducks walking or a flock of sheep not so safely grazing, because one of the children eventually kicks a black lamb over the hill. The two girls (Geraldine Somerville, Debra Gillett) walk along the skyline, their squeaking pram larger than the fields this side of it. A plane flies on a wire across the blue sky and disappears into a promptly raised blue flap the other side. These jokey tricks occur mainly in the early scenes, but quite near the end the chastened bully (Gerard Horan) stamps down the hill and kicks the church tower as he passes. Bong! You can see that Marber wants to tell us into thinking the play is going to be amusing, self-conscious and pantomimic, so as to make the disaster in the barn hit like a whiplash. The roar of the fire, the flames (real ones) and collapsing roof timbers are exceptionally naturalistic and sharply different in style from the rest of the direction, where the children chase each other above the sky, and in the end are left standing up there, denying responsibility for the tragedy, while Michael Gambon's voice is heard reading, indistinctly, Housman's poem from which the title comes. Somerville and Gillett catch the gait and deportment of little girls extraordinarily well, the way they riddle their ankles or smirk. The males hobble too much when galumphing around the place, but are credibly boyish in their interactions: Steve Coogan (the creator of Alan Partridge, in his first company role) exuberantly inventing death by cooking apple, then wailing in fear; Matt Bardock's stutterer, killing Indians without a care, then weeping over a dead squirrel; the would-be know-all of Nigel Lindsay, and Robert Glenister's Donald, inconsolably grieving for his dad, a prisoner of the Japanese. In the closing moments laughter freezes, but either Marber's direction or the play itself makes the end less anguished if the catastrophe is known beforehand. I would need to see a not-so-quirky production to decide, but just possibly this is a play best seen just the once. The production is sponsored by Oracle Corporation. JEREMY KINGSTON

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MUSIC 1
New challenges and a British tour for the virtuoso percussionist, Evelyn Glennie



MUSIC 2
The LSO pays homage to the composer Toru Takemitsu under the baton of Daniel Harding

THE TIMES ARTS



BASE NOTE
A glittering swansong for Gary Barlow? Take That's former muse heads the Novello nominees



CHOICE
From children to seasoned veterans: see the Going Out pages in the Weekend section for the best shows

Banging about in the kitchen

Anyone with front row tickets for tonight's concert at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, by the percussionist Evelyn Glennie need not shovel down an early dinner beforehand. They might just find that they are fed during the performance. Glennie will be giving the world premiere of a piece of solo percussion music called *My Dream Kitchen*, written by the jazz composer Django Bates. It involves a full battery of kitchen implements and is written around the act of baking a cake.

The piece will develop as I play it during the tour, but it is actually extremely detailed on the score. My technician has been working out how to hang saucepans and pots to get the right sounds. He has built an acoustic worksurface for chopping and grating and another for the plates and baking tins.

I play the pans and do some chopping and then pop the ingredients into a mixing bowl. Then I move over to play the marimbas for a bit of relaxation before coming back to the mixing bowl and the baking sheets, where I start getting a wee bit more anxious. I start bashing away at the pans, and checking the apple cores and bits in the bin and then in my frustration I end up throwing my watch and my cookery book into the mixture before sticking it all in the oven.

Normally I hate cooking so this is all about my fury in the kitchen. I should have something to cut up and distribute by the end but I'm sure it will

Joanna Pitman meets the superb percussionist Evelyn Glennie on the eve of her British tour

evolve and improve with each performance.

On second thoughts, Swatch-and-cookery-book cake may not be ideal for an end of concert snack, but I can guarantee that its production will be well worth watching.

In a musical civilisation that is infinitely complicated and vast, Glennie insists on finding and experimenting with everything herself. She has a mind and a physical awareness that is trained to close and intense observation and she looks at every idea hard, even down to a mere apple core, searching for its musical possibilities.

On stage she is an enormously impressive artist with a visual theatricality as well as an incisive musicality; and the fact of her profound deafness is the very least of it. Confronted with the live creature herself, you immediately see that all the exuberance and eloquence of her music is there in the person, plainly visible in her face, her tiny, supple body and her softly ringing Aberdeen accent.

Glennie's experimental creativity is her dynamo. She

rampages through a vast diversity of ideas for her percussion music, jumping between cultures and across continents. The past ten years have been about experimenting, about looking for and commissioning new works, expanding the repertoire written for percussion and expanding and shaping myself too as a musician at the same time.

There is a gleefulness about her as she speaks, and each new concept or observation brings with it a wide, secure and contented smile. It is the sort of smile that shows she has a pretty clear idea of what she wants and that she knows she has the discipline to achieve it.

This three-week British tour, which will take Glennie, her kitchen and her armoury of drums and instruments to 11 cities, reflects this vital and eclectic spirit. She will play African rhythms, Latin American folk, mythical medieval music and some energetic rock rhythms. This demanding tour is typical of a schedule that annually incorporates 110 concerts, a four-month spell in America, as well as trips to Japan and other Asian countries.

You get the impression that for Glennie a life without pressure would be no life at all. She does not mind that she has spent only 12 nights at home so far this year. She loves constant demands, constant achievement and improvement. And it is all self-generated. She would never be able to sit around waiting to be inspired; instead she rushes around perspiring and playing, inventing new instruments (she has a collection of 700 that includes bin lids, spoons and car parts as well as hundreds of orthodox instruments from all over the world), and composing her own music too. Her OBE and her growing international recognition have made her no less radical a performer. And that is why I get the impression that Glennie still wakes up happy in the mornings.



Everything including the kitchen sink: Evelyn Glennie expects her cake-making skills to improve with each performance of *My Dream Kitchen* on her three-week tour

Take That line up a Novello

BASE NOTES

THE leader of the sadly defunct Take That, Gary Barlow, heads the list of nominees for the 41st Ivor Novello Awards, to be presented in London on May 30. His song *Back for Good* is nominated in four of the eight categories, including that of Best Song Musically and Lyrically. But ownership of the key trophy, Best Contemporary Song, will fall to either Noel Gallagher of Oasis for *Wonderwall*, the Supergrass team for *Alright*, or Edwyn Collins for *A Girl Like You*.

Bob Dylan, the Who and Eric Clapton at the Prince's Trust benefit, to be held in Hyde Park on June 29.

IT IS Diane Fletcher and not Nicola Pagett who will lead the recent version of *An Ideal Husband* to the Old Vic next week when the hit Peter Hall revival continues its acclaimed run. Pagett, who is unwell, bowed out during rehearsals.

FRESH from the early success of his first film, *Beautiful Thing*, the playwright Jonathan Harvey is planning his first-ever stage musical in collaboration with the Pet Shop Boys. Harvey met the group some years back when they contacted him after his first television play, *West End Girls*, whose title derives from a Pet Shop Boys' song. The team will begin work on the musical this month.

THE critic, historian and broadcaster Christopher Frayling has been appointed as the new Rector and Vice-Provost of the Royal College of Art. He will take up his post on July 15. Frayling has been with the college since 1979, when he was appointed its first Professor of Cultural History.

THE 41st competition for the Kathleen Ferrier Awards for young opera and lieder singers took place at the Wigmore Hall last week. First prize — £10,000 and a London recital — went to Geraldine McGreevy, a 28-year-old graduate of the Royal Academy of Music. Second prize of £5,000 went to Alison Buchanan, 27. The Decca Prize of £2,500 was awarded to Konrad Jarnot, 23.

THIS year's cultural capital of Europe, Copenhagen, is celebrating its maritime location in suitably seafaring style, with an open-air exhibition of contemporary artwork installed in 20ft ship containers. Ninety-six artists from as many seaports around the world are contributing to the exhibition, titled *Container 96 — Art Across Oceans*, which runs until August 31.

JUST 21 years old and with ten million sales of her album *Jagged Little Pill* under her belt, Canada's Alanis Morissette will return to Britain to appear at the four-day Phoenix 1996 festival at Long Marston, Stratford-upon-Avon, on July 19. She has also been confirmed as support to

SOME £300,000 of prize money is up for grabs as Prudential launches its 1996 Awards for the Arts. Around 600 arts organisations have been invited to submit entries for the five categories of dance, music, theatre, opera and visual arts. The five category winners stand to receive £50,000 each — double the amount of last year. Rodney Milnes, *The Times* opera critic, will be sitting as judge on the opera panel.

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CONCERT
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Barbican

AT 20, Daniel Harding is believed to be the youngest person ever to conduct the London Symphony Orchestra. This record was set on Thursday night, when he led the orchestra through a concert dedicated to the memory of Toru Takemitsu.

Harding's style is dynamic, employing vigorous gestures to achieve results of great vibrancy and immediacy. To Britten's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge* he brought a sweeping line, not least in a poignantly realised *Funeral March*.

John Williams was the distinguished soloist in two works for guitar and orchestra, the first, *Concerto Antico*, by Richard Harvey, receiving its London premiere. Harvey's biography describes him as "primarily a film and TV music composer", and indeed the mock-Tudor colours and rhythms of his concerto would have served nicely for a costume drama.

Harding's immediacy is a less obvious virtue in music that explores states of the subconscious — such as Takemitsu's *To the Edge of Dream*. And, with the solo guitar amplified, I wondered whether there should have been a more persuasive sense of floating, of something distant and ethereal.

Conductor and orchestra were incontrovertibly in their element, however, in Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin* suite. Harding has an impressive mastery of the scores he conducts, enabling him to deliver performances brimming with confidence and panache.

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

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Russell Miller contacts the stars, in *The Sunday Times Magazine*

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See Style tomorrow

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Due to a squalid deal between Greens, farmers and government, the British landscape is being scarred by dark, satanic wind towers

Old Macdonald had a wind farm

Last month the Agriculture Minister, Douglas Hogg, stood in the House of Commons and announced a subsidy of £118 million to the beef rendering industry, to soothe its ruffled finances in consolation for causing the greatest food scare in Britain since the war. In a normal industry, the renderers might be sued by their customers and left to go bankrupt. I had to pinch myself. This was no normal industry, it was farming. It holds the taxpayer to ransom. Any business such as rendering that can plead kinship with farming is able to do likewise.

Farmers last month savaged airlines, steak houses and hamburger chains for "not backing British beef". They did not savage the renderers. But airlines, steak houses and hamburger chains are outside the charmed circle of Mr Hogg's friends. They are too far down the food chain to claim subsidy. Serve up dairy beef and they go to the wall. Those who supplied them with the beef are compensated. And this is called a government for private enterprise.

Who, you might ask, will be next to seize on the word "farming" and demand subsidy? I can tell you. The answer is the second most pampered "private" industry in Britain, electricity supply.

Most readers of this article — so marketing tells me — now holiday abroad. They leave the countryside

to plebs in caravans and foreigners. They assume government will look after the countryside until they retire. Most readers, therefore, will not have visited Cornwall of late. Parts of that county not already desecrated with caravans and bungalows are being devastated with wind turbines.

Drive along the north Cornish coast today and you will get a shock. From St Ives eastwards, the land rises gently towards Bodmin Moor and then Exmoor. It is near impossible to walk or drive this coast and not be within sight of the rotating wind towers of St Breock, Delabole and Cold Northcott. They claim to cover just a few acres. They do not. Their wild, gesticulating intrusion covers the entire coast. Seven more such clusters are planned for the county.

The same shock awaits visitors to mid-Wales. The headwaters of the Wye and the Severn penetrate the most deserted countryside south of Scotland. These Powys hills are now dominated by 103 towers stretching in rows on the hills above Llanidloes. The Dovey Valley in Snowdonia is punctuated by 24 turbines placed on a hill above Cemmaes and visible from the

Cader and Plynlimon ranges. Twenty-four more clusters are proposed for Wales. In Yorkshire, a generating station above Hebden Bridge looms over the finest scenery in the Pennines. A proposal to erect an initial 37 towers along the unspoilt south coast of Caithness is barely believable.

I imagined that energy science might one day be able to put underground its worst plague on the face of the British countryside, the electricity pylon. I scarcely believed that it would come up with something even more obtrusive. Nor did I imagine that by allying itself to the Green lobby and calling its generators "wind farms", the energy industry would be able to demand subsidy for their intrusion.

These generators are nothing to do with either farming or cheap energy. They are the product of a deal between Greens, farmers and government. The king of the wind farms, the Energy Minister Tim Eggar, both offers subsidies to build turbines and levies a tax on every fuel bill to pay for the more expensive energy they generate. This deal was under the 1990 Non-Fossil Fuel Obligation, a crude concession to the Green lobby and

Simon Jenkins

Jonathon Porritt's Friends of the Earth made in Lady Thatcher's last months in power.

If the Brent Spa fiasco did not convince me that this lobby is a serious threat to the environment, its support for the wind turbine industry will do so. I was amazed to visit the Delabole generating station in Cornwall and find Green literature cosily on the shelf alongside manufacturers' handouts. Outside, a once-lovely landscape was rent by whirling rotors and rumbling turbines. The manufacturers claim that the locals like them. Everybody likes subsidy. I hope Cornwall (and Wales and Yorkshire) likes a plummeting tourist income.

Wind is not free energy. There is no such thing. If wind power were free, or even cheap, there would

have been wind "farms" before the Government began to subsidise them in 1990. Wind power costs money to collect and distribute, money to build, equip and service, money to inflated fuel bills. It costs direct subsidy from Mr Eggar.

Nor are these the only charges. Greens love to cite "external costs" attributable to other forms of power generation. Porritt applies what he calls full-cost pricing to every energy source — except that to which he has lent his name. His lobby claims wind power is wholly "non-polluting". He cannot have stood in a field of turbines, let alone seen them across an upland slope.

Every user of the countryside knows that visual pollution is unquantifiable, hard to control and even harder to reverse. Once built, these towers will remain forever (all "farm" subsidy is forever), or their sites will be converted to other industrial uses.

These are not rural structures. They are not like the windmills of old, no bigger than church towers and made of local materials. They are power stations, made of metal and towering to a height of more than 200 feet (Nelson's Column is

170 feet). Whereas ordinary cooling towers are clustered, usually in a hollow or on flat country, these towers dominate thousands of acres. Indeed the British Wind Energy Association recommends mounting turbines "on as high a tower as possible and well clear of obstructions such as buildings, trees, etc". These are not monuments, like standing stones. The constant gesticulating motion distracts the eye and destroys tranquility for miles around.

I would like to feel that this subject was controversial. Discuss it with ministers, civil servants or MPs and I realise that they do not use the British landscape any more. Their landscape is that of France and Italy. The Department of Industry reassures wind farm investors that "there are well-established procedures for handling the issue" of environmental sensitivity. That procedure is to ignore it. Three years ago the department claimed it did not want turbines in national parks. Yet it permits them nearly round their perimeters. The 21 massive WEG MS-3 turbines at Cold Northcott on the Devon-Cornwall border wave madly across two "areas of outstanding

natural beauty" as if determined to strip that phrase of all meaning. These are government towers. They march across the finest landscapes in Britain not for reasons of national security or economic efficiency. They are trivial as a power source. All the wind farms in Britain today will produce the same amount of power over the next 25 years as one normal power station in three months. If just 10 per cent of Britain's energy were to come from wind turbines, it would require huge subsidies and 24,000 towers on almost every prominent hill in Britain. The towers are follies, monuments to late-Thatcherism's vulnerability to any lobby that pushes at its door.

I find it hard to blame the farmers. They are now addicts wholly dependent on government handouts. When government told them to rip up hedges, they ripped them up. When told to replant, they replanted. Yesterday it was grain and rape-seed. Today it is set-aside and wind towers. Where subsidy goes, there goes the farmer.

Wind towers are patently a mistake, encouraged by politicians in absentia from the British landscape. They testify to the power of public subsidy to do wrong. They are Britain's Chernobyl. Perhaps Labour will have the guts to dismantle them. Dare I say, it would even be worth some compensation.

Why her will wasn't done

Anthony Howard recalls the Iron Lady's cold war with the Church of England hierarchy

Amid all of John Major's tribulations, one factor is frequently overlooked. Unlike his predecessor, he has faced remarkably little trouble from the Church of England — apart, that is, from those chosen by the BBC to deliver *Thought for the Day*. George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, speaks openly of the Prime Minister as "a friend" — not, one suspects, a formulation that Margaret Thatcher would automatically have reached for to characterise her relationship with Dr Carey's predecessor, Robert Runcie.

It is hard today to summon back the antagonism that existed between the Anglican hierarchy and the Tory Government in the 1980s. For a time, the bench of bishops appeared to supply the sole effective opposition to an administration which, in its Prime Minister's words, wanted to "change everything". But the one institution that she signally failed to change during her 11 years in power was the Anglican Church.

It was certainly not for want of trying. She took her duties to the Church of England very seriously, even going to church at Chequers far more regularly than any of her predecessors. Her first major ecclesiastical appointment was to select Dr Runcie, from the two names submitted to her by the Crown Appointments Commission, to be the 102nd Archbishop of Canterbury. In July 1979, after she had been in office for barely two months, she invited him to Downing Street and, when the then Bishop of St Albans expressed doubts about his qualifications for the job, it was she who considerably told him that he should reflect on her offer over the summer holidays. This he duly did. Six weeks later her patience paid off and Runcie's appointment as Archbishop in succession to Dr Donald Coggan was announced.

They were not strangers to one another. When Margaret Roberts (as she then was) was president of the Oxford University Conservative Association in 1946, Runcie, as a decorated Guards officer re-

turning from the war, had been a member of the association's committee — if only in the slightly peripheral role as the nominated representative of the somewhat toffee-nosed Oxford Carlton Club.

There is no reason to doubt the essential goodwill that existed between No 10 and Lambeth Palace when, in March 1980, Dr Runcie took possession of the See of Canterbury. Why, then, did things so swiftly and abruptly go wrong? In his retirement, living in a modest suburban house in St Albans (a far cry from the formal grandeur of Lambeth or the archaic charm of the Old Palace at Canterbury), Lord Runcie is remarkably candid about what occurred. He believes that from the moment of the Falklands Thanksgiving Service in St Paul's Cathedral in July 1982, when the Church deliberately eschewed any form of triumphalism, he was identified as "an acceptable target" — if not by the Prime Minister (who actually congratulated him at the time on his sermon on the theme of reconciliation), then by her acolytes. That company may even have included Denis Thatcher, who promptly reported to a group of Tory MPs that afternoon: "The boss is livid."

The Falklands service was one of the defining moments in the relationship between Church and State during the Thatcher era. But it was not the only one. The tougher elements in the Tory party were quick to spot the Anglican Church as a weak sister in their crusade to bring trade union power to heel, particularly during the miners' strike of 1984-85. It was not that the Archbishop himself said anything that could be interpreted as bringing aid and comfort to "the enemy within". (Indeed, Dr Runcie was far more restrained than Randall Davidson had been in the General Strike of 1926.) But the appointment that summer of David Jenkins as Bishop of Durham soon put a spark to the tinder. When Jenkins called, in his enthronement sermon, for the withdrawal of "an elderly, imported American" (meaning Ian McGregor,



Robert Runcie and Margaret Thatcher: no meeting of minds over the Falklands War

chairman of the National Coal Board), even the Tory was seen to have felt that a jihad had been declared.

They were almost certainly wrong. But the Church did not help its supposedly neutral stance by publishing, in the immediate aftermath of the strike, a highly critical report on urban priority areas, entitled *Faith in the City*. This was a serious attempt to look at the problems caused by inner-city decay, something that Michael Heseltine himself had earlier done in his report to the Cabinet on conditions in Liverpool. But by 1985 the political dogs had begun to bark and the caravan had moved on. Even liberal ministers, such as Willie Whitelaw, thought that the Church was dabbling in dangerous waters. Someone (his identity remains unclear) went so far as to brand *Faith in the City*, in advance of publication, as an example of "Marxist theology".

Mrs Thatcher did try to get a dialogue going. In November 1987, she invited the Archbishop and seven other (mainly liberal) bishops to lunch at Chequers. Alas, it did not prove to be an entirely felicitous occasion. The Prime Minister did not listen: instead she lectured. The assembled prelates may have sensed they were being chastised; they do not seem to have felt particularly chastened.

Six months later, insult was added to injury by what became known as "the Sermon on the Mount". Mrs Thatcher's address to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May 1988. In it she appeared to emphasise choice as a Christian virtue. Worse, she cited with some relish St Paul's dictum: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." It was classic self-help stuff — and John Habgood, Archbishop of York, may have made the wrong response by loftily an-

nouncing that he found the Prime Minister's biblical exegesis "somewhat odd".

By then there was little hope of repairing the breach. It remained wide open until Margaret Thatcher and Robert Runcie each left office — one forcibly, the other voluntarily — within two months of each other in the winter of 1990-91. John Major and George Carey, men of similar backgrounds, may have more obvious achievements to their credit. But one of the hidden ones surely lies in the way in which they have contrived to restore harmony to an area where — to borrow and adapt a famous quotation once used by Mrs Thatcher herself — there used to be only discord.

The author presents a series about the Church of England. The Purple, the Blue and the Red, starting on Radio 4 next Thursday at 8pm and repeated on Sunday at 4.15pm.

Hark the Tory faithful returning to the fold

These results should bring the party to its senses, says Kenneth Baker

The verdict of the local election results for the Government is bad but not disastrous. There will not be a meltdown of the Conservative Party at the next election. In my own constituency, the Liberals lost control of Mole Valley council last year and, despite a visit by Paddy Ashdown, they lost another seat this year. Every Conservative seat was held and the Conservative vote went up. There was the distinct sound of the Tory faithful returning to the fold.

This result will also extinguish the rumours that flared up in Westminster this week about John Major's position. These had been fanned by Tony Blair and there were enough glum Tory faces around to reconfirm the natural tendency of the Lobby to enhance, embellish and exaggerate a mood. There is simply no question of the Prime Minister standing down or being ejected from Downing Street. His position as leader of the party was settled by his re-election of July, 1995.

Those who, for a long time, have wanted John Major to go, now say that the Tories cannot win with him as leader, but that we may have a chance with someone else, or indeed anyone else. For this to come about, certain things would have to happen. Step forward that brave and far-seeing band of men in grey suits who will do the dirty deed. Step forward the voter-friendly candidates. How fortunate we have so many. Step forward the electoral college of Tory MPs. How fortunate they are still so many. And then step forward the elected winner. Lastly, step forward the men with the handbags and tourniquets.

The Tory party this weekend should come to its senses. For if John Major were to go — either pushed or voluntarily — the country would feel, with some justification, that this issue should not just have been left to the small electoral college of Tory MPs, but to the wider electorate of the whole nation. The clamour for an immediate general election would be strident and irresistible. Those MPs who mutter behind their fluttering hands or whisper from the sides of their mouths about the need for a change and a new leader should realise that they, too, are candidates for such a process of change.

I remember a meeting of the

1922 Committee, back in the late 1960s, when Ted Heath's leadership was under question. That splendid figure of Tory stability, Rear-Admiral Sir Morgan Giles, MP for Winchester, stood up and said: "No bloody panic, pro bono publico." That message should be repeated today. For the Tory party to turn on its leader in the present circumstances would be like the savaging of a wounded colleague. There is something deeply repugnant and indeed indecent about such behaviour. Cynics may well say: "You have nothing to

In mitigating the Government's unpopularity, Mr Major's stoic virtues are an advantage

lose." But the British people would not forgive a party which sacrificed its leader for the second time in six years.

At this moment in the history of the Tory party, we do not need cynicism or scepticism, but a little stoicism. The Government may be deeply unpopular, but that is not a permanent state of affairs. If we cannot dispel it all, it is certainly possible to mitigate it. The stoic virtues of the Prime Minister are an advantage. He has withstood an avalanche of abuse and he intends to continue and to defend his record. He is rightly proud of the economic success of his Government.

The Government can sensibly do several things. First, it should plan on the basis of being in office until the spring of 1997, with a general election held on local government day next year, May 1, 1997. And, with a little luck and a lot of determination, that is pos-

sible. This will provide the opportunity for a short Queen's Speech and an imaginative Budget which cuts taxes, particularly for the lower-paid. Tony Blair will say the Tories are hanging on by their fingernails, but we are quite entitled to run our term, particularly if it sees the fulfilment of our policies. And that it will certainly do.

On Europe, the Government's policy is now more in tune with the overwhelming sentiments of the country than that of any other party. Only the Conservative Party is standing up for our nation's vital interests. The Liberal Democrats would roll over and Labour would uncritically cosy up to a European superstate, even swallowing the poison pill of the social chapter, just as other European countries are beginning to rewrite that chapter. The frankest and fullest debate on Europe is now taking place within the Conservative Party. That is a sign of maturity, rather than of weakness, for it reflects the growing anxiety across Britain about the way in which the political development of the European Community is moving. The official policy of the Conservative Party is now that of Margaret Thatcher's Bruges speech, and that chimes with public sentiment. The Conservative commitment to a referendum on a single currency makes Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party irrelevant. The voters will have a real choice at the next election, but it will be a choice provided by the three main parties.

On the economic front, Britain has been transformed from the sick man of Europe to a country that everyone wants to follow. The British public may not fully appreciate that, but it is true.

How is new Labour going to improve upon this? If it is time for a change, then do we want to change from low interest rates, from low mortgage rates, from low taxes, from falling unemployment, from increasing exports, and from rising investment? All of these successes would be at risk under new Labour, for Mr Blair has no policies that can improve upon them but several which threaten them. The message which has to be got over in the next 12 months is: new Labour is in danger.

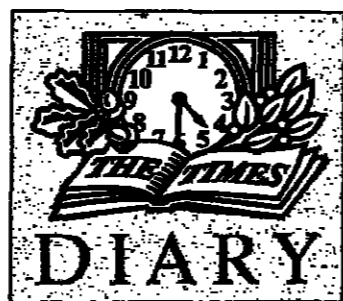
How galling

BRITAIN'S greatest living Frenchman has snubbed his President. In a diplomatic faux pas that has left the Gallic corps diplomatique aghast, Eric Cantona has kicked an invitation to meet President Chirac

into touch. Chirac was keenly aware that he could score a public relations coup by being photographed with the footballer during his state visit to Britain later this month. So Cantona, along with Newcastle United's pretty Gallic star David Ginola, was invited to a select party at the French embassy.

To Chirac's disappointment, both players have declined the invitation without explanation. Ginola may already have booked an end-of-season holiday but Cantona's diary must be empty in case of an FA Cup replay that week. "We don't know why they can't come," says a French embassy official. "There's now no chance of the President meeting them on this trip."

Cantona may have declined because he is regarded as an exile in France, where public opinion is sharply divided on his antics. Despite being Britain's Footballer of the Year, he looks unlikely to be



recalled to the French side for the European Championships. "He's just fed up with the French," says an Old Trafford source.

Old mould

ONE FURTHER manifestation of the decline of the aristocracy comes today from the Queen's cousin, Lord Harewood, a man with a passion for children's jelly. Today he throws open the doors of Harewood House near Leeds for a jelly festival. In a celebration of jelly-making from the 14th century to the present day, the old kitchens at

Harewood have been dusted down for the first time in 50 years. The bearded peer is a quiver with anticipation.

New & Lingwood, shirtmakers to impoverished aristocrats and suppliers of boxer shorts to Prince William and his fellow Etonians, have snapped under fashion's awful pressures. For the first time in their history, they are selling button-down shirts of the sort favoured by American investment bankers.

Tooth tour

FOR THAT tingle-fresh holiday, nothing can quite compare with Hungary, a country with as much pride invested in its dentists as in its goulash. In a jaw-dropping attempt to lure tourists away from Prague and Bucharest, Hungarian Airtravels is for the first time offering dental holidays.

Free consultations and half-price bridge work are thrown in as part of the trip, and dentists collect their petrified patients from the airport. "Hungary has a history of good

dental work," sparkled a spokesman from the travel agents. "There are whole streets of dentists."

Out of school

HEADMASTERS are furious about the *Sunday Express's* attempts to lure school sneaks out of their traps. The paper is so desperate for stories, any stories, that it is trying to recruit tale-telling school-



A-tingle: the SR toothpaste girl

boys through a discreet advertisement in its pages. The paper asks for marks to feed its stories from any top public school "such as Ampleforth, Eton, Fettes, Harrow, Roedean or Rugby," and some state schools such as the London Oratory, attended by Tony Blair's son Euan, and Harrogate Grammar.

"If someone had a good story on the Oratory or Eton, I'd give them £500 like that," says the *Sunday Express* education correspondent. Six out of the top ten ranked independent schools have complained, calling the advertisement scandalous.

Royal elbow

THE PRINCESS of Wales escaped the humiliation of being "psychoanalysed" by Channel 4 but she will surely feel the cold blast of public opinion in next month's *Harpers & Queen*.

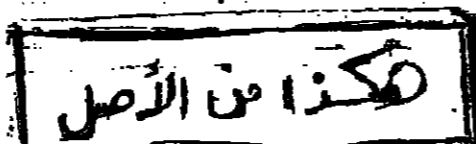
She doesn't even feature in a forthcoming survey of the "50 most alluring women in the world." A panel nominated the candidates for their subtlety, mystery and attraction. Audrey Hepburn came top



Winner: Audrey Hepburn

and such sirens as Catherine Deneuve and Isabelle Adjani are also highly placed. The Princess was apparently squeezed out by Ruby Wax and the cartoon character Jessica Rabbit.

P.H.S





MAJOR POSSIBILITIES

Defeat defeatism and speak to the ideals of Britain

Nobody can pretend that Thursday night's local election results were good news for the Conservatives. Only a party used to the cataclysmic can see a mere disaster as a relief. But at least now there will no more such tests until the general election. If, through will and leadership, the party can put its bad news and bad behaviour behind it, the Tories may begin the slow trudge back to popularity.

This much was clear from the demeanour of the two main party leaders yesterday. John Major, despite the drubbing his side had received, looked relaxed and confident. He told radio listeners that he would remain at his post "through to the next election — and beyond"; and at least the first part of that claim now looks set to be true. Tony Blair, meanwhile, the victor of the evening, had nothing new to say, except his rejection of the complacency that among his colleagues is all too visible.

Mr Major's troops need badly now to see that something is going their way. They can still remember the Harman affair and how Mr Blair could be badly rattled. After that rare political gain, Tory MPs started to behave in a more cheerful and disciplined manner, for a short few weeks. They need to regain that composure, and build upon it, to have a chance of steepening their ascent in the opinion polls.

How might that be done? First, those few senior Conservatives who still believe that they have a chance of winning the election — John Major, Michael Heseltine, Brian Mawhinney, perhaps a few others — must persuade more MPs to share this faith. Defeatism, which is now endemic even in the Cabinet, is the main enemy of political recovery. Voters can sense it instantly in ministers' faces, words and deeds.

There are glimmers of hope that optimists can reasonably extract from the pattern of voting on Thursday. Labour's share of the vote, at 44 per cent, was some ten points below what the party scores in opinion polls. Labour has clearly not yet offered the electorate good enough positive reasons for support. It can be said that some Labour

attrition was inevitable because the Liberal Democrats always perform better in local elections than in national polls. But most of the extra Liberal Democrat votes seem to have come from Labour rather than the Tories, whose share was on a par with their national poll rating. The high Lib Dem vote could be a symptom of intelligent tactical voting against the Government. But it could also show that much of the anti-Tory vote was a single act of protest.

Secondly, the Tory inner circle must take advantage of some harder months ahead for Mr Blair. The policies that Labour has yet to decide are the most contentious ones, those likeliest to cause rebellions in his ranks. The Tories need to extract maximum gain from this: before he announces his plans, they can exploit his uncertainty; afterwards they can whip up dissent and, in doing so, spread the confidence of the innermost circle to the Tory troops at large.

Thirdly, and this has always been the hardest task for Mr Major, he must find a firmer appeal to that idealistic side of the British character so dismissed by European leaders such as Karl Lamers in his letter on this page today and in his article in *The Times* last week. Herr Lamers, like many senior Germans, divides views of Europe into his own objective "supranational reality" and others' "subjective consciousness" of their national identity. Mr Major, ever happy when deriding idealistic notions as "cloud cuckoo land", too often sounds like Herr Lamers. Tory voters would rather that he did not.

The Conservatives can improve their position only by pounding out their support for a Europe of nations and the peril of Labour ceding the last British sovereignty to Brussels. If members of his party cannot agree on exactly what they are for, most ought to agree upon what they are against. Although the Tories remain outsiders to win the next election, they should not write off the possibility. To do so would be bad for immediate British governance, bad for what remains of their electoral hopes and even bad for Mr Blair's modernisation of Labour.

BALANCE IN JUSTICE

The next Lord Chief Justice should seek to consolidate

Since his appointment four years ago, the Lord Chief Justice has shown himself a brave fighter for his profession and his principles. As Lord Taylor of Gosforth draws on that courage for the struggle with cancer which has prompted his early retirement, he can be assured of respect and support from both his political critics and the judiciary whose reputation he has worked so hard to bolster.

Lord Taylor inherited his job at a low point for the judiciary. His predecessor, Lord Lane, had presided over a decline in public faith in the criminal justice system after the quashing of the convictions of the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four. Maladroitness in the handling of their appeals had led to the establishment of the first royal commission for more than a decade. It also contributed to a widespread feeling that judges, although they must remain independent, should be a little nearer the agora than Olympus.

Lord Taylor had demonstrated sure-footedness during the inquiry into the Hillsborough disaster and was determined to bring the operation, and thinking, of judges closer to the people. In stark contrast to Lord Lane he held press conferences, granted interviews and even appeared on the BBC's *Question Time*. His personal candour and wisdom were applauded and contributed to a better understanding of the process of justice. In his efforts as Lord Chief Justice to modernise his profession, Lord Taylor has not always trod as cautiously as his more conservative members might like. But he has displayed a confidence, integrity and intelligence which command respect.

There have been criticisms of the Taylor glasnost. Lord Donaldson of Lynton, a

former Master of the Rolls, has counselled caution. The traditional view, articulated by Lord Parker of Waddington in 1967, was that judges should make their views known in private consultation, not on public stages and that any involvement in political debate could only undermine judicial independence and contribute to an erosion of authority. The fierce dispute over sentencing policy between Lord Taylor, and the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, has certainly led to a backlash against the judiciary from Conservative critics in Parliament and press.

But there is no doubt that Lord Taylor speaks for the majority of his profession. His entry into political controversy was designed to see off what judges saw as an unwarranted extension of the executive's power in their domain. We have disagreed with some of Lord Taylor's arguments, but in making them he has provided a reasoned opposition to change that few politicians have been willing to supply.

Although in many ways a moderniser, Lord Taylor has resisted the unhappier forms of modernity. He has opposed racial or gender quotas for either judges or juries and stood out against televising courts. The task for his successor is to consolidate the changes already made and provide a measure of stability on the Bench. Another institution which benefited initially from greater openness, MIS, has opted for a lower profile in its new director to provide reassurance after Stella Rimington's reforms. The essence of law is balance — justice tempered by mercy. Just as Lord Taylor balanced Lord Lane, so now a new Lord Chief Justice should steer his profession away from the sound of gunfire.

FRENCH FOOTWORK

A tricky ball in Chirac's court

Who, in British eyes, is the greatest living Frenchman? An actor — a Depardieu, perhaps? Or maybe a philosopher — even if only Derrida springs commonly to mind. The British imagination could also seize on Sylvie Guillem, who has brought so much to the Royal Ballet, or even Jacques Delors, the Eurocrat we loved to hate.

One man, however, is seen to embody all their talents. He even lives on our own shores. Step forward Eric Cantona, the one Gallic soul whose British admirers can be counted in their millions. Here is the man who must surely be honoured by President Chirac in ten days' time as his country's real ambassador to Britain. But there are snags.

As President Chirac plans his state visit, the Elysée, the Quai d'Orsay, the French Embassy and all those charged with adding élan to the trip have been wondering how the great footballer can be pictured together with the President. But state visits have their own rigid protocol. Banquets. When could M Chirac find time to give the great man a hearty embrace, exchange a few locker-room jokes or josh the ambulant philosopher (not too severely, the aides advise, lest a piquant remark provokes another drop-kick)? Surely, then, invite M Cantona to the embassy reception for Britain's French community? But Cantona is not M Chirac's

favourite football export. He and his countrymen, it seems, are prouder of David Ginola, the Newcastle United player. For them, he is the suaver, smarter, more stylish Frenchman, a man who played for a Paris team when M Chirac was the capital's Mayor. France sniffs at Cantona's childhood spent in a cave outside Marseilles and laughs at television's satirical puppet portrayal of a latter-day Picasso spouting meaningless intellectual drivel. Only les Anglais, they say, who cannot tell the difference between a Cartesian principle and an artesian well, prefer the troglodyte.

Both would have to be invited. But then the second snag occurs: a cocktail party is not the natural stalking ground for British tabloid photographers. The meeting would have to be arranged in a more public place. How about a serendipitous encounter during one of the President's walkabouts? All these machinations, however, have hit an insuperable obstacle: neither footballer seems interested in meeting his President. Both have turned down the embassy soirée; both have hinted they will be nowhere near the Chirac luncheon. Such *l'esse-majesté* would once have occasioned a reprimand more deadly than anything handed down by a British court: nowadays M Chirac can only ask his aides to try harder.

The nation state as seen from Bonn

From Herr Karl Lamers

Sir, Great Britain is in the midst of a fundamental debate on her position in — or her relation to — Europe. This can be useful, if in the end it leads to clarity. In his response to my article of April 27, "Beyond the nation state", William Rees-Mogg has argued his case (April 29; see also letters, May 1 and 3) and it is very clear indeed.

Lord Rees-Mogg agrees with my analysis that the Euro-sceptics deal with the inner, subjective reality of the consciousness (as opposed to the objective external reality). He shares my reference to Britain's island status and he elaborates on the different historical experiences of our two countries.

Obviously counting himself as one of the "more hardline Euro-sceptics in Britain" he concludes from the differences in views, perceptions and political culture in Britain and in Germany that Britain should "step aside" and create a new, friendly but independent relationship with Europe.

I do not know whether it would be good for Britain to do that. William Rees-Mogg's entire article devotes not a single word to what I called the objective, external reality.

Sir Roy Denman and Mr Stephen Woodard, in their letters of May 1, pointed to the economic prosperity and the political influence Britain gains from her membership in the European Union. In Sir Roy's book, *Missed Chances*, an American diplomat is quoted as saying that British influence in Washington is contingent upon British influence in Europe. I would even go one step further: no European power is any longer able to protect her vital interests acting on her own.

The objective reality includes a supranational reality with supranational problems and supranational threats. The nation state can no longer sufficiently protect the nation against these threats. This does not mean the nation state should be abolished or replaced. It just needs something else, another community on a higher level, added to it.

The objective reality calls for an effective European Union. If we make the European Union capable of acting against the cross-border threats to our nations, then (and I think only then) can we secure the future and thus the identity of our nations.

It is for the British to decide which of the two realities they want to be guided by when they choose and design their room in the European house. The others have a right to expect a choice to be made, but they will then have to respect it. The future EU will have to allow for different degrees of integration. But I hope the British join those who are determined to try to make Europe efficient enough to protect the common interests of our nations.

Yours faithfully,
KARL LAMERS
(Foreign Affairs Spokesman,
Christian Democratic Union),
Bundeshaus, AH214,
53113 Bonn,
May 3.

Lottery licence

From the Director General of the National Lottery

Sir, Of course I was aware, when I took my decision to award the lottery licence to Camelot in May 1994, that the two people referred to in your report today ("Daring breaks silence on lottery concerns") worked for GTEch.

The substance of this latest instalment of your criticism of my role as the regulator of the National Lottery, therefore, is only that I did not have total recall, before the Public Accounts Committee on December 11, 1995, of what I had known, in May 1994, about all eight applicants for the operating licence and their employees or prospective employees.

For the record, I undertook vetting procedures on some 1,300 individuals and 230 companies in connection with the evaluation of applications for the licence to run the National Lottery.

Yours faithfully,
PETER DAVIS,
Director General,
Office of the National Lottery,
2 Monck Street, SW1,
May 3.

Coastguard dispute

From Mr Graham Allen, MP for Nottingham North (Labour)

Sir, The Government's cuts in the coastguard service (report, April 29) are another example of its inherent myopia. By leaving the coastguard under-skilled and under-resourced the Government is asking for disaster.

But it is not only lives and our beautiful coastline that are in jeopardy: the Government is also risking clean-up bills of millions. Surely it is in the public interest to have the sensible insurance policy of an adequate number of coastguard stations around our coastline with properly trained staff to avoid accidents like that of the *Sea Empress*.

Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM ALLEN
(Shadow Minister for Transport),
House of Commons,
April 29.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Farm food and the length and quality of human life

From the Honorary Secretary of the Farm and Food Society

Sir, There are points in Michael Hornsby's article, "Why caged birds need questioning" (April 30), which need questioning.

"If we are living longer and healthier lives than ever before," writes Mr Hornsby, "it is in large part because of the huge increase in the supply of high-quality and relatively inexpensive food made possible by modern fertilisers and pesticides." The operative word is "it": we may be kept alive longer due to medical technology and drugs but the value of life needs to be assessed on quality rather than length.

The Food Commission came into being precisely because of the inferiority of much of our food production, while there is now an important movement to restrict the use of agrochemicals because their dangers are recognised. The full cost of our "inexpensive" food, including environmental pollution, grants and subsidies to farmers, or cruelty to animals, is never taken into consideration by those who assess it by retail prices.

"The cooking and handling of food is a far bigger cause of food poisoning than farming," Cooking and handling of food do not in themselves produce toxic bacteria, some of which are generated on the farm, and have greatly increased since the introduction of factory-farming.

"Most deaths (of non-battery laying hens) are associated with the stress induced by exposure to an uncontrolled environment." Laying birds are so genetically engineered that they are only adapted to continual egg-laying in unnatural conditions. Broiler birds bred to produce meat at the cost of

their proper development cannot survive long outside the hot-house conditions of the broiler-house. This does not indicate "happiness" in intensive conditions. Machines are incapable of happiness.

Yours faithfully,
JOANNE BOWER,
Honorary Secretary,
The Farm and Food Society,
4 Willifield Way, NW11,
May 1.

From Mr Ian Stirling

Sir, Dr Thomas Stuttaford ("A medical case for meat", April 30) must think I am in a parlous state of health, since he states that vitamin B12, "essential for the production of blood", is found only in meat and animal products; yet with the exception of occasional dairy products, which I have decreasingly eaten during the last five years or so, I have eaten almost no bits of animals since the end of the Second World War.

How is it that at the age of 76 I can (in most cases) easily outdo most of my contemporaries in physical fitness and agility? The idea that cooked muscles of factory-reared animals will provide a healthy bloodstream does not make sense to me.

Rightly or wrongly, I no longer drink cow's milk, but soya milk instead. French butter does occasionally tempt me, but at least most French cows are allowed to live in fields.

As for the farmers' views in an accompanying article that "the farming revolution has done far more good than harm", I would rejoice that people may now live longer, but question just how healthy they are.

Cruelty to animals is often ignored, provided profits are to be had from ex-

plotting them, regardless of disease and degeneration, as eloquently explained by Juliet Gellatley in her piece on broiler houses.

Meat-eating has had its day. The planet could perhaps sustain over six billion inhabitants on a vegan diet, far more than its present population — many of whom starve with 30 per cent of what they consume coming from animal sources.

Yours sincerely,
IAN STIRLING,
32 Powis Gardens, NW11,
May 1.

From Lord Elliott of Morpeth

Sir, Having read your disturbing article, "Scenes of the slaughter", April 29, may I make the following points?

I very much hope that the slaughterman filmed torturing a sow, before inadequately dispatching it, has been identified and at the very least severely reprimanded.

Secondly, the report of a consignment of lambs arriving at the same slaughterhouse and having their throats cut without being stunned, is surely a contravention of existing law. I hope action has been taken on this.

Reports of cruelty in abattoirs abroad have often been publicised. It is deplorable to learn of such occurrences in a British abattoir.

Slaughter should be as humane as possible and certainly carried out according to existing law.

Yours faithfully,
ELLIOTT
(Chairman, Select Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1980-83)),
House of Lords,
April 30.

Search for peace in the Middle East

From Mr David Leigh

Sir, You report (May 1) that the Israeli Government is considering overtures made to it by Hezbollah which imply that the Islamic militants will recognise Israel in return for an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

It is anathema to the vast majority of nation states that they should make concessions in terms of security in order merely to achieve recognition (whatever that may, in fact, mean). However, the fact that Israel finds itself forced to contemplate such action indicates the lengths to which Shimon Peres will go to attain a peaceful settlement. It also indicates that all those purporting to aspire to a peaceful Middle East should support him in the forthcoming election.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID LEIGH,
65 Eton Avenue, NW3,
May 1.

From Mr Herb Greer

Sir, What Patrick Seale (letter, April 27) leaves out of his anti-Israeli tirade is a simple fact: since the founding of Israel the Arab countries surrounding it (now joined by Iran) have directed their best efforts toward the genocidal destruction of Israel.

With Anwar Sadat leading the way, a few, a very few, of the leaders among Arabs have been brought to see that this is a stupid, futile, and often lethal enterprise. I stress the word "leaders" because that insight has dawned on so few among the non-Israeli populations of the region. And leaders in the Arab world, as we have seen in the decades since 1948, are dangerously disposable.

Yours,
HERB GREER,
124 Fog Lane,
Didsbury, Manchester 20,
April 27.

Openness on defence

From Rear-Admiral J. P. W. Middleton

Sir, The RAF is to leave Germany (reports, May 2). No great concern there, except surprise at the funeral pace of the drumbeat of retreat. What vital task will the RAF undertake in Germany for the next six years that suddenly evaporates in 2002?

What is of concern, however, is the optimistic atmosphere that accompanies each and every announcement of yet another in the continuous sequence of death by a thousand cuts. The Ministry of Defence's bland reassurances may pacify elements of the electorate, but they certainly do not reflect the views of the majority of servicemen.

Some retired officers do their best to articulate warnings but, in the absence of an effective briefing system, they can seldom deploy all the rele-

vant arguments with sufficient force to frighten the horses; and they may, sometimes legitimately, be dismissed as "yesterday's men".

A clear priority in these days of more open government is to scrap the archaic gagging order which prevents serving officers from communicating with the media on matters of defence policy. It is unsatisfactory for the MoD to shelter behind the Official Secrets Act and, uniquely, to deny its expert practitioners the chance to speak up.

Only when the MoD's cheery spin-doctors are supplemented by the clearer, truer and less comfortable views of serving officers will the nation begin to learn of the Armed Forces' real state and direction.

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK MIDDLETON,
Manora,
Chilmark, Wiltshire,
May 2.

Youth violence

From Professor R. T. D. Oliver

Sir, With the advertisements for the film *Barb Wire*, with Baywatch star Pamela Anderson Lee being used to brainwash society with Hollywood's obsession that women should behave like men and use guns and killing as a solution to all perceived unfairness, I suppose we shouldn't be surprised by the events that led to the death of a 13-year-old schoolgirl in Corby recently (reports, May 1, 2).

Yours sincerely,
TIM OLIVER,
86 Cambridge Gardens, W10,
May 2.

From Mr H. J. Baker

Sir, For many years films and television have featured violent fights in which the participants apparently suffer only slight and temporary damage. Moreover, many computer games, with which it seems a large number of children are obsessed, contain extreme violence which affects the victims not a whit.

It is not surprising therefore that many children seem to be unaware of the possible effects of violence in real life. We cannot turn back the clock; but may we hope that parents and schools will now take the necessary action to educate children about the likely results of violent attack.

Yours faithfully,
H. J. BAKER,
8 Grovelands,
Lower Bourne, Farnham, Surrey,
May 2.

Churches' destruction

From Mr John Jolliffe

Sir, Like many misguided and destructive people, the iconoclasts of the Civil War (letters, April 20 and 27) were at least painfully sincere, unlike the hitmen of Henry VIII a century earlier. Nor did they destroy whole churches.

By contrast, Edward Seymour, Protector and Duke of Somerset from 1547 to 1552, not only stole and pulled down the London houses of three bishops in order to glorify himself by building Somerset House; he also pulled down St John's, Smithfield; Barking Chapel, near the Tower; the college church of St Martin-le-Grand; St Ewan's, Newgate; and the parish church of St Nicholas.

The Protector also ordered the demolition of St Margaret's, Westminster; but when the work began the parishioners attacked the workmen with bows and arrows and clubs, and the workmen all ran away. Having brought his own brother to the block in 1549, Somerset was himself executed.

The iconoclasts were luckier, and died in their beds. But the harm they did was irreparable.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN JOLLIFFE,
Church House, Chesterblade,
Shepton Mallet, Somerset,
May 1.

Real hymns

From the Reverend Dr Ian Bradley

Sir, David Wright is not the first person to propose a campaign for real hymns (report, April 22). I launched a similar crusade three years ago with the acronym CATCH (Campaign for Traditional Church Hymns). There is also a group based in Sheffield who go by the name of SERAPH (The Society for the Encouragement, Recital and Appreciation of Proper Hymns). Perhaps we should amalgamate.

Meanwhile, to Mr Wright I say, or rather sing: Courage, brother, do not stumble; say not "the struggle nought availeth"; and, above all, fight the good fight.

Yours etc.
IAN BRADLEY,
University of Aberdeen,
Department of Theology and Church History,
King's College, Old Aberdeen,
April 24.

Brought to book

From Professor Denis Stevens

Sir, Requiring a brief extension to my reader's ticket, I (75) was ordered by the Punishment Department of the British Library to walk half a mile to a remote kiosk, which took four bad photographs and 2½ pounds sterling. Mercifully it was not pouring with rain. When I returned, the PD used only two of the photos, thus wasting £1.25.

It seems to me that if an official body demands a photograph, a suitable apparatus must be provided under its own roof. The Bodleian Library in Oxford does so. In case your readers consider this an isolated case, they may be interested to know that similar treatment was meted out to a lady reader who shared my objection and pointed out that we had both been obliged to waste half an afternoon, as well as lose a quarter of a fiver.

Shame on the British Library, once a happy haven of help for scholars.

Yours etc.
DENIS STEVENS,
The Quadrangle,
Morden College, Blackheath, SE3,
May 2.

NEWS

Defiant Major fights on for a year

A battered but defiant John Major declared that he would lead the Conservatives on a long haul into the next General Election and beyond.

Thursday's local election results were among the worst for any governing party, leaving the Tories wiped out in several parts of the country. But the outcome was still not the cataclysm that would have had MPs calling for Mr Major to go. Pages 1, 8, 9

Boy ordered to leave 'adoptive' mother

A ten-year-old Zulu boy left Britain for South Africa last night to be reunited with his natural parents after the white woman he had come to regard as his mother lost an extraordinary custody battle to keep him. Pages 1, 5

Release condemned

Magistrates, police officers and MPs from all parties condemned the release of Matthew Simmons, the football hooligan. Page 1

Holiday exodus

Tens of thousands of Britons headed abroad for the May Day Bank Holiday weekend after cold weather at home. Page 1

Farmers' challenge

Farmers formally launched their legal challenge to the European Union's export ban in the High Court. They were joined by beef and sheep exporters. Page 2

Waterfall tragedy

Two holiday snapshots showed how a freak wave drowned two unsuspecting tourists at a Caribbean waterfall. Page 3

Schools alarm

More than 2,000 schools on the brink of failing their pupils are to be named and inspected every term. Page 4

Hitler's engines hold the Bosnia line

Steam engines that were once used on Hitler's eastern front have been restored by British engineers to haul trainloads of coal in Bosnia. They have been taken from sidings and museums and set to work to become a lifeline for central Bosnia, keeping power stations supplied with coal. Page 10

Woman priest case

A council's arts and museums officer was made redundant after she became one of the first women to be ordained, an industrial tribunal was told. Page 6

Aids test mistakes

Four people who were wrongly cleared of having the Aids virus by a faulty test have been told they are HIV positive. Page 7

Chinese dissident free

Liu Gang, once China's third "most wanted" political dissident, has escaped to America. Page 12

Hezbollah sanctuary

A UN inquiry has found that Hezbollah guerrillas were sheltering in a Lebanon base when Israel shelled it. Page 13

Millennium invasion

A Vatican official joined a former minister to say that Rome was ill-prepared for an "invasion" of 40 million pilgrims for the millennium celebrations. Page 14

NATURE NOTES



Death's Head Moth (Mawhinnis localis)

The only moth to produce an audible squeak. Self-immolates in the flames of torches. Extinct in Essex.

OPINION

Major possibilities: Nobody can pretend that the results were good news for the Conservatives. But there will be no more such tests until the election. Tories may begin the slow torque back. Page 19

COLUMNS

Simon Jenkins: Douglas Hogg announced a subsidy of £118 million to the beef rendering industry. This was farming. It holds the taxpayer to ransom. Page 18

ARTS

Crowd pleaser: Virginia Bottomley believes that it is crucial to break down barriers that stop millions of people from enjoying the arts, says Richard Morrison. Page 15

BUSINESS

Jobs: 5,000 may be cut after a merger between Royal and Sun Alliance. Page 23

SPORT

Football: Like a good who-dunnit the championship of England will be decided on the final turn of the page. Page 44

LETTERS

Farm food; European nation state; Middle East. Page 19

OBITUARIES

Emile Habibi, writer; Peter Swales, of Manchester City; Scott Douglas, ballet dancer. Page 21

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,159

ABERLOUR A limited edition, 1970 vintage bottle of Aberlour single malt whisky, the only malt whisky to have twice won the prestigious Gold Medal and Pot Still Trophy at the International Wine & Spirit Competition, will be given for the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The winners and solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-22.

- ACROSS 1 One who incites rabble in combat or disorder (8). 5 Striker's merits set out (6). 10 Guardsmen on fatigues (7-8). 11 Why sulk, one may ask - it's just a drop in the ocean (4-3). 12 Illiberal Southern state in ruins after reform (7). 13 Lay drunk and impervious (8). 15 Animal in book - a pig? (5). 18 A state of agitation - but not hot afterwards (5). 20 Colourful building material that's applied to modern foundations (8). 23 Legendary bird caught in low part of Africa (7). 25 Provide care for a small charge (7). 26 Soul in political broadcast? That'll fool viewers (7,5). 27 Barber-shop quartets, perhaps? They're not professionally trained (6). 28 Such a disposition could be militant (8).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,153 and Solution to Puzzle No 20,158. Includes crossword solutions for words like WARRANT, HOTPOT, PLAYDOWN, ANNOUNCEMENT, etc.

WEATHER

Table with 2 columns: Region and Forecast. Includes Greater London, Kent, Sussex, Devon & Cornwall, etc.

ROADWATCH

Table with 2 columns: Location and Road Status. Includes London & SE traffic, M25 London Orbital, etc.

HOURS OF DARKNESS

Table with 2 columns: Location and Sun/Moon times. Includes London, Bristol, Edinburgh, etc.

HIGH TIDES

Table with 4 columns: Location, AM, HT, PM, HT. Includes London Bridge, Aberdeen, Avonmouth, etc.

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday's highest day temp: Falmouth, Cornwall, 14C (57F); lowest day temp: Cape Wail, Highland, SC (41F); highest night temp: Isle of Wight, 10C (50F); lowest night temp: Traw, Highland, 14F.

FORECAST

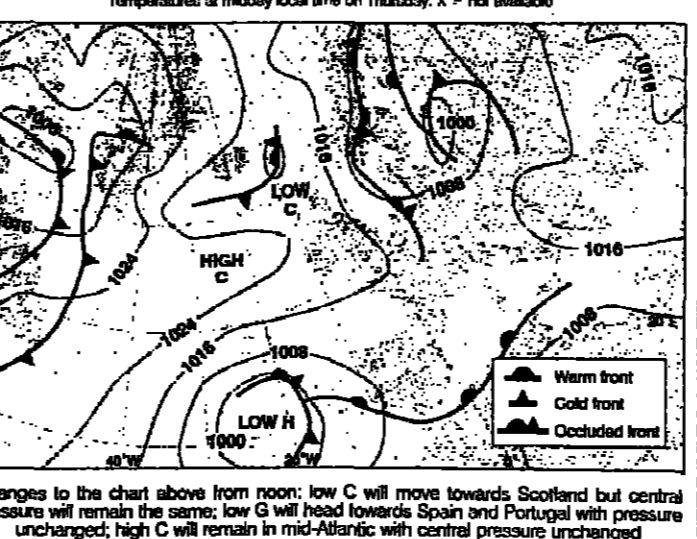
General: England and Wales will have a cold and frosty start. The morning will be sunny and mainly dry, but showers are expected to develop with most places likely to have one or two during the afternoon. It will feel rather chilly. Later showers will peter out. In Scotland and Northern Ireland frost will lift in morning sunshine and in the west many places will remain dry until late in the day. In the east there will be showers with sunny intervals. London, SE England, E Midlands, NW England, Lake District, Central M. SW Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands, Moray Firth, N Ireland: frosty start. Sunny periods, showers developing. Wind light, northerly. Rather cold. Max temp 10-12C, 50-54F.

AROUND BRITAIN

Table with 3 columns: Location, Sun, Rain, Max. Includes Aberdeen, Glasgow, London, Manchester, etc.

ABROAD

Table with 3 columns: Location, Sun, Rain, Max. Includes Alicante, Athens, Barcelona, etc.



VISION

VISION advertisement featuring a photo of a woman and text: 'Rural life: Postcards from the Country, Wednesday, BBC2, 9.50pm. Political comedy: Lord of Misrule, Mon, BBC1, 9pm.'

Marriott Leisure Breaks SUPERSAVERS advertisement. Includes text: 'The UK's ultimate choice in City and Country breaks. Even better, the selected hotels below are offering special May SuperSaver rates, so a Marriott break has never been greater value.' Lists hotels like Rose of the Shires, Heart of England, etc.

SECTIONS

Ginny Dougry meets a frightening actor. Him indoors: Does it make for happy families? Great outdoors: 24 pages.

WEEKEND

Gardens: Are chemicals needed? Pages 1, 2.



Books: David Lean; John Grisham; Archer... 10, 11. Travel: Switzerland, Canada, Cyprus... Page 2.

10 15 Kavana: The new boy wonder? Page 6. Wn: TV and video, multi-media computer... Page 3.



Rural life: Postcards from the Country, Wednesday, BBC2, 9.50pm. Political comedy: Lord of Misrule, Mon, BBC1, 9pm.

The fastest man on Earth.

Polic right and b...

Me...

Count...

Count...

Count...

Count...

كندا من الاصل